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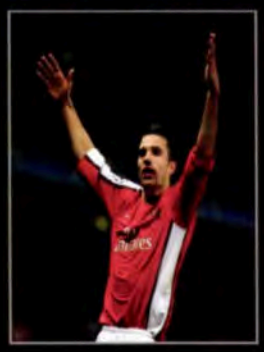

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October 2009

THE 2010 WORLD CUP FINALS are 250 days away and already the favourites are lining up, not least Brazil, England and European champions Spain.

England, for once, have qualified for the World Cup with something to spare. Talk of a golden generation is surely premature, though. Aside from the precocious Jack Wilshere (page 72), it is hard to see where the next generation of talent is going to emerge from. The Premier League's proposed quota system has been welcomed as an attempt to promote more home-grown talent. But the move could easily backfire and we are likely to see more, not fewer, Gael Kakutas (page 22) in the future.

On the basis that my enemy's enemy is my friend, Sepp Blatter is suddenly enjoying a good press in England. But if FIFA is to avoid Kakuta becoming a cause celebre, a properly regulated system of compensation for clubs such as Lens is urgently needed.

A shame for England is that the likes of Wilshere will not be featuring at the Under-20 World Cup (page 90) after the Football Association backed off a dispute with the Premier League over player availability. The Spain team that won the 1999 edition of the competition featured the likes of Xavi Hernandez.

It was no coincidence that last year those same players triumphed at senior international level for the first time in over 40 years.

GAVIN HAMILTON, Editor
gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com

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...IN PICTURES

The global game caught on camera

Hero and villain...Manchester City's Emmanuel Adebayor ran the length of the pitch and nearly provoked a riot while celebrating his goal against his former club Arsenal

JVC

Double header...Lionel Messi (left) and Darijo Srna square up to each other in the UEFA Super Cup

Lyon tamers...Lorient's Jeremy Morel (right) and Laurent Koscielny find a way to stop Lyon's Bafetimbi Gomis

Jump to it...Milan's Mathieu Flamini (16) and Alexandre Pato avoid Livorno's Luigi Vitale

Down but not out...Fernando Torres can only watch as the ball escapes him during Spain's World Cup win against Belgium

Blue army...a tattooed and toothless Rangers fan enjoys the win at Hearts

Lighting the way...fireworks in the Donbass Arena, the new home of Shakhtar Donetsk and potential Euro 2012 venue

Brian Glanville

...on the ancient practice of tapping up young talent... Eduardo, the fall guy...England's lack of midfield inspiration...and the wining and dining of Jack Warner

Charlton...Toon bound?

THERE'S nothing new under the sun, least of all in football. The horrid affair of Chelsea, poacher supreme Frank Arnesen and the then 16-year-old Gael Kakuta in itself is no surprise, however unsavoury.

Arnesen, once such a splendid Denmark international inside-forward – the word midfielder covers too much in differentiated ground – has recently been promoted at Stamford Bridge, but he was taken from Tottenham precisely to pursue young, sometimes very young, talent; sometimes, alas, with a lack of success in sharp contrast with the strategies involved, not to mention the price to be paid when the birds came home to roost. Even if the players concerned didn't.

I am thinking, obviously, of the acquisition – a euphemism in this case – of the two teenaged Leeds United players, Michael Woods and Tom Taiwo. Leeds, outraged by the loss of these two players with not a penny paid, went angrily to the Premier League who supported their case. It cost Chelsea £5million and the sad sequel of it all is that neither player has yet broken through.

As far as Chelsea and such recruited teenagers are concerned, their name is legion for they are many. Yet turn back in time, turn back as far as the early 1950s, and what do we find at the Bridge? Why the notorious teenage-talent catcher, alias the chief scout of the time, the wily Jimmy Thompson. Why, you might well wonder, did as shining a young talent as Jimmy Greaves, a classical cockney from London's East End, sign for Chelsea rather than West Ham United?

But Manchester United in those days were still more notorious for their ruthless pursuit of young promise. Today, they stand furiously accused by Lazio of spiriting away from Rome the gifted teenaged attacker Federico Macheda. Again, what's new? Why did Bobby Charlton join Manchester United rather than his local club Newcastle United? Both his brother Jackie and his late mother, Cissie, have denied that there was any, shall we say, dirty work at the crossroads. Yet Jackie Milburn, idol of Tyneside, and a close relative of the Charltons, told me many years ago that all was arranged for Bobby to join the Magpies, with a job in what was then Kemsley House (Kemsley Newspapers owned national and regional papers), when Manchester United swooped and signed him.

> "Bobby Charlton was all set to join Newcastle until Man United signed him"

Moreover, Jackie told me – and as a young freelancer, I didn't attempt to publish it – that Mrs Charlton herself told him that Manchester United had offered the family £750, a lot of money then, and that they couldn't afford to refuse it.

And what of Duncan Edwards, that supremely powerful and adventurous left-half, so cruelly lost to club and country after the appalling Munich airport crash of February 1958? Born in the West Midlands, in Dudley, it would have seemed logical for him to join nearby Wolves, or perhaps West Bromwich Albion. But United beat them to the punch, and Edwards joined and excelled with them. And, I suppose you could say, he would have gone striding on into his 30s had he not been lured to Old Trafford.

Arsenal in those remote days – and long after – were exempt from such aspirations. Yet in recent times they too have swooped on European youngsters. They enraged Paris Saint-Germain when they persuaded the teenaged Nicolas Anelka to leave the French club for nothing when he was already a first-team player. In due course, the Gunners somewhat patronisingly threw PSG a bone of consolation in the shape of £500,000, but when they sold a frequently rebellious Anelka for £23m to Real Madrid, you might say they had hugely the better of the bargain.

More recently there has been the case of Cesc Fabregas, whisked away from Barcelona at the age of 15 and destined to become the outstanding Arsenal player of his time. Barca got nothing for him. When the Gunners acquired another gifted teenager from Barcelona in Fran Merida, the Spanish club were reported to be taking the roundabout course of suing the player himself. With what effect one doesn't know.

FIFA have come down heavily on Chelsea, though their proposed ban on any transfer activity until 2011 may be mitigated by the club delaying its appeal and thus gaining breathing space to buy next January. Or, again, that appeal may be upheld. Chelsea might feel that, given the prevalence of such teenage captures, they are being made the scapegoat. In the meantime, grey areas abound. Given the diversity of customs in the various European countries, short of a general agreement between them all – not the easiest thing to achieve – or some kind of an age limit imposed by FIFA themselves, a satisfying solution seems elusive.

Arsenal themselves incurred the fury of the French authorities at the coaching centre of Clairefontaine when they pounced on the teenaged Jeremie Aliadiere, who did have one glorious night against Internazionale at San Siro but never quite cracked it

Eduardo...diving controversy

with the Gunners, and after going out frequently on loan he eventually became a regular at Middlesbrough.

That wound may appear to have healed but, by and large, it is all too open on the continent.

WAS Eduardo, in more senses than one, the fall guy? Accused of diving to obtain a penalty against Celtic, UEFA suspended him for two European games, only to shamelessly go back on its decision a fortnight later.

Whatever the culpability or otherwise of Eduardo, UEFA has potentially opened a fine old can of worms. For where now does it stop? How often will it be prepared, on TV evidence, to overrule a referee who hasn't given a spot-kick when one would, in retrospect, have been justified? And what effect is this going to have on referees who will be fearful of a posthumous UEFA inquiry?

The temptation could well be not to give the defender the benefit of the doubt for fear of being second-guessed in Nyon.

And even if Eduardo had been judged by UEFA not to have been touched by Celtic keeper Artur Boruc, was he not, as Arsene Wenger suggests, trying simply to protect himself? Remember the appalling foul and fearful damage inflicted on him that dire day at Birmingham by Martin Taylor?

HAVING said which, there was absolutely no excuse for Croatian FA president Vlatko Markovic to accuse English football of deliberately damaging Croatian stars.

Did he, in his one-eyed state of delusion, not reflect on the fact that it was Luka Modric against whom a foul was given at White Hart Lane when he broke a bone in his leg? This was a shocking blow both to Spurs and Croatia, and a deep disappointment to those of us who delight in Modric's splendid skills in a time when classical inside-forwards are at such a premium; except perhaps in Spain.

My goodness, how badly England need a Modric. Or a Paul Gascoigne. Where does the inspiration come from in central midfield? Not, alas, from Frank Lampard, efficient and effective though he is. Certainly not from Gareth Barry, essentially a fine holding player with shrewd tactical assessment but no real pace.

What England sadly and badly lack is the element of surprise, which Gascoigne then and Modric now, until his injury, were so able to supply.

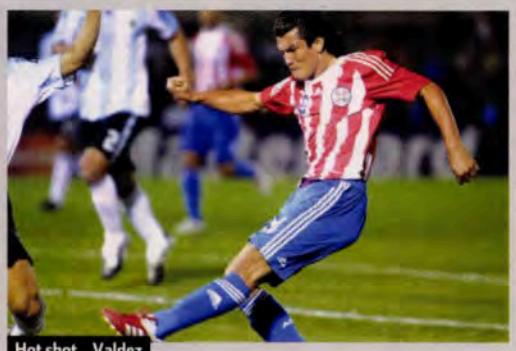
HOW depressing and humiliating to read that when the ineffable Jack Warner of Trinidad recently came to London he was "wined and dined" by the FA.

If true, what a nauseating piece of grovelling to a weasel figure who has never hidden his dislike and bizarre contempt for English football, and who, as that fine investigating journalist Andrew Jennings recently told us, has still fully to pay off the members of the gallant Trinidad team which so surpassed itself in the last World Cup.

Jennings has torn Warner and his machinations to pieces in his book *FOUL!*, but in any case it is reported that the man has already promised the CONCACAF 2018 vote to the US. ●

Modric...self-inflicted injury

GOALS
WE'D LIKE TO SEE AGAIN...


Hot shot...Valdez

1 Nelson Haedo Valdez, Paraguay v Argentina
Some intricate team passing, finished off by a firm left foot shot low past the keeper

2 Enzo Maresca, Olympiakos v Larisa
Meets an overhead pass with a right-foot volley from the edge of the area which flies into the far top corner

3 Adel Taarabt, Morocco v Togo
Dribbles inside the penalty area, then nutmegs two opponents before sliding the ball past the keeper

4 Eduardo, Lens v Grenoble
Drags the ball away from his marker, beats three defenders and fires past the keeper

Solo...Eduardo (11)

5 Nicklas Bendtner, Denmark v Portugal
Chest trap followed by a half-volley

3 Ariel Nahuelpan, Coritiba v Goias
A stunning bicycle kick after an error by the goalkeeper

AND TWO TO FORGET...

Kakha Kaladze, Georgia v Italy
A couple of beauties from the defender, both in his own net, allowed Italy to move three points closer to the World Cup finals

Grounded...Kaladze

To see clips of these goals, visit www.worldsoccer.com

NUMBERS GAME

€150m
the annual wage bill at Internazionale – the biggest in Serie A

5
number of officials on the pitch for Europa League games this season following the introduction of two "additional assistant referees"

60
players called up by Diego Maradona in his nine games as Argentina coach

£81m
the value of the four-year sponsorship deal between Liverpool and Standard Chartered bank

2
European games Arsenal striker Eduardo was banned for...before UEFA changed its mind

708,573
the population of Bahrain, who will become the smallest country to qualify for a World Cup finals if they beat New Zealand in November's play-off

5
the target weight loss, in kilos, of Maradona after he checked into an Italian clinic following defeats to Brazil and Paraguay

£80m
net spending by English Premier League clubs in the summer transfer market, down significantly on 2008, according to accountants Deloitte

REPORTS we couldn't make up

Prank...Iranian officials were taken for a ride over Shojaei (left) and Nekounam

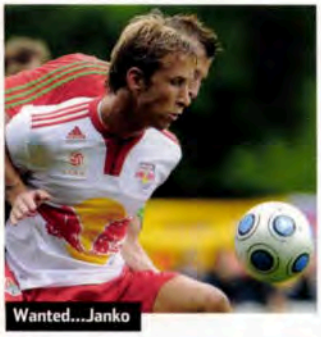
REFEREE'S MIND GAMES

Israeli referee Assaf Keinan is not the most decisive match official you will ever come across. During a game between Maccabi Tel Aviv and Bnei Sakhnin, he validated a Maccabi goal, only to change his mind after consulting one of his assistants. The end of the matter? Not quite. On speaking with the fourth official there was another volte-face and, with the Bnei players still up in arms, Keinan had a final word with his linesman before ruling out the goal.

CAUGHT IN THE WEB

According to the website of Spanish club Osasuna, their two Iranian players, Javad Nekounam and Masoud Shojaei, were suspended recently for a late-night visit to a disco. With officials in Iran about to come down hard on the pair for their non-respect of Ramadan, it emerged that the story was a hoax, placed on the site by a hacker.

RUMOURS we'd like to believe

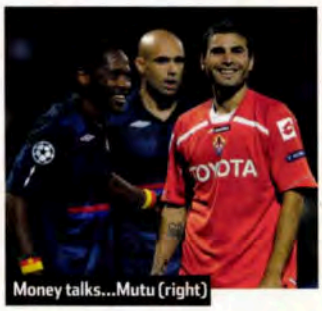

Wanted...Janko

According to *Tuttosport* in Turin Juventus are sweet on Salzburg striker Marc Janko, who has had enough of the Austrian top flight, while Radio Monte Carlo are suggesting Bordeaux's Moroccan marksman Marouane Chamakh will move to Juve on a free at the end of the season.

Our colleagues at Russia's *Sport-Express* believe Bayern Munich are ready to make a move for CSKA Moscow keeper Igor Akinfeev. Sources in Munich claim unwanted Bayern striker Luca Toni will decamp to Milan or Fiorentina in the January transfer window.

Another to be declared surplus to requirements at Real Madrid, Germany centre-back Christoph Metzelder must choose in the next couple of months whether he wants to start the new year at Bayern Munich, old club Borussia Dortmund, Schalke or Fiorentina.

Romanian insiders think there is life in the story that Adrian Mutu will quit Fiorentina for Terek Grozny if the Russian club pay the fine he owes Chelsea.


Money talks...Mutu (right)

Paul Gardner

Forget diving, tactical fouling is scourge of the modern game

NOW THAT THE Eduardo "diving" escapade has been put to rest, it is interesting to contemplate just why it ever rose to such prominence.

It was not a decisive factor in the Arsenal-Celtic tie and the incident itself was far from clear, with no conclusive evidence pointing either for or against a dive. The referee – one of UEFA's best, Manuel Gonzalez of Spain – and his assistant were both satisfied a penalty was the right decision.

Yet UEFA chose to butt in and in no time had given Eduardo a two-game ban for diving. It then had to back down because, as it admitted in a mealy-mouthed sort of way, it had not been "established to the panel's satisfaction that the referee had been deceived".

The loudest noises accusing Eduardo came from the chief executive of the Scottish FA, Gordon Smith, who let it be known that he considers diving – "simulation" was the word he used – to be "one of the most serious threats to the integrity of football".

Smith, pretty obviously, is not alone in this quirky view that diving is so much more damaging than leg-breaking tackles, violent elbows and so on. We see many more examples of those than we do of diving, but it seems diving has acquired a special infamy because it is seen as cheating.

One needs to go further: diving is not just cheating, it is also sneaky – and this makes it unspeakably horrible. And it leads to a person of authority, such as Gordon Smith, being able to keep a straight face when he intones his "most serious threat" nonsense.

Diving is a difficult topic without the Smiths of this world adding moral overtones. One hears, repeatedly, accusations that a player "went down too easily". So are we to assume that a player, after contact, after a foul, should make an attempt to stay on his feet? Why? If he should manage to stay upright, after a stumbling step or two, he will have lost the ball anyway – and he's unlikely to get the decision. Why wouldn't he go down?

A much more sensible approach is to take a look at the tackling, much of it crude, some of it reckless, some even downright violent. That might, you would think, also be of concern to Smith & co, but apparently not.

There will be plenty of opinions on this topic, so I shall now pipe up with my own favourite – one I consider, at this moment in football's history, to be "one of the most serious threats to the game's integrity" – tactical fouling.

I've just watched a whole bunch of Champions League games. There were no examples of diving to secure penalties; not even any claims by the opposition. But every game featured examples – I would say the average per game was around five or six – of flagrant midfield tactical fouling.

The typical foul I'm complaining about comes following a sudden loss of possession. Team A are pressing forward, committing numbers to the opposing half of the pitch. When it breaks down, Team B get the ball and launch a quick counter – only to have it stopped immediately, usually in their own half, by a foul from Team A designed simply to break up the play, stop the game, and allow them time to get their defenders back in position.

Sometimes, but not nearly often enough, the player committing the foul will be booked. Strict adherence to the rules would mean every such foul should receive a yellow card. The list of "cautions for unsporting behaviour" (these are obligatory cautions) includes the offence of committing "a foul for the tactical purpose of interfering with or breaking up a promising attack".

In the first 15 minutes of the Champions League game between Chelsea and Porto, the English club committed three such fouls – by Michael Ballack, Ashley Cole and Michael Essien – all near the halfway line. Four minutes into Internazionale v Barcelona, Inter's Maicon gave the ball away near the halfway line and immediately fouled Thierry Henry as he attempted to send Barca away. In the second half, Maicon was on the receiving end as he broke out of defence, only to be barged over by a posse of three defenders while still in his own half. In the 70th minute of the Standard Liege-Arsenal clash, the visitors gave the ball away in midfield and Standard's Dieumerci Mbokani was immediately fouled by Alex Song.

Breaking the play...Inter's Maicon hauls down Henry

"Strict adherence to the rules would mean every such foul should receive a yellow card"

These are random examples and, while all these fouls were given, only Essien was booked – and that, I'm sure, was because his tackle was reckless, not because it was a tactical foul.

What is going on is plain and simple cheating; attempting to gain an advantage by not playing according to the rules. I could add that the referees are deceived on most of these fouls – or are they just not prepared to give the required yellow cards?

We hear repeated exhortations from FIFA and the Gordon Smiths of this world about the insidious menace of the occasional diving offence, but little about the threat of constant tactical fouling. ●

David Conn

A tale of two takeovers

THE CLAIM BY Sulaiman Al Fahim in late August that he had finally completed his takeover of Portsmouth meant that the Dubai-based businessman has been involved in two such Premier League deals in successive summers. However, the contrast between them could hardly be more stark.

Last year, Al Fahim brokered the Manchester City takeover by Sheikh Mansour of Abu Dhabi – a deal signed, sealed and delivered before the outside world had a sniff. Mansour instantly served up £32million to sign Robinho, just to show the world he was serious.

We learned that Al Fahim was something of a Dubai D-list celebrity, and he preened in the limelight just a little too much, bragging about City signing one galactico after another, babbling names like Cesc Fabregas and Cristiano Ronaldo, and boasting about his backers having "very deep pockets".

For Mansour, and Abu Dhabi's ruling figures, this posturing went against the grain of their philosophy, which is to let their actions – and what they do with their unfathomably deep pockets – speak for themselves. Since that first spectacular signal of intent, Mansour's new regime has stayed loyal to the manager, Mark Hughes, and executive chairman, Garry Cook; spent around £15m on refurbishing training facilities, the medical treatment room and other infrastructure at City; and delivered almost a whole new team for around £250m in two industrious transfer windows.

In the first, Hughes delivered left-back efficiency in Wayne Bridge, midfield enforcement in Nigel De Jong, sparky forward Craig Bellamy and Shay Given, the reliable goalkeeper who many are speaking of as, among more celebrated stars, City's most important signing.

In the summer they went shopping again: Carlos Tevez, Emmanuel Adebayor, Gareth Barry – the midfield muscle long coveted for Liverpool by Rafael Benitez – and a new central defence of Kolo Toure and Joleon Lescott, the latter for whom £22m of oil money proved an offer too good for perennially overstretched Everton to refuse.

Alex Ferguson had begun to drip vitriol, which Hughes insisted he took as a compliment: recognition from the old manipulator that the scruffs from across town were finally a threat. The most penetrating of Ferguson's attacks, though, was that City were the "Bank of England club". This referred to Sunderland of the 1950s, who spent huge money signing mesmeric Len Shackleton from Newcastle, Ivor Broadis from Carlisle United and many other stars of the day, only to finish the decade relegated from the top flight.

Ferguson's charge was that buying a team of ready-made stars does not work; footballers take years to gel and a good club has a spine of home-grown players. He levelled the same sneer at Real Madrid's borrow-to-buy galacticos policy.

Questions...Al Fahim

Yet Hughes' City began the season, despite ever playing really well, by winning their first four games. They beat Blackburn, Wolves and Portsmouth – with Al Fahim in the stand – then, in their first top-four test, slapped Arsenal 4-2. All this before much in the way of gelling had taken place.

At Portsmouth, Al Fahim had spent the summer doing entirely the opposite of the sheikh he formerly represented. He spent weeks doing due diligence while one quality player after another sprinted through the Fratton Park exit. He was doing no public talking this time, and his spokesman, Ivo Ilic Gabara, always available, always prepared to answer the obvious difficult questions, said repeatedly that the deal was on course, as planned. Why a multimillionaire, with money to spend, would watch players drain away at a club he was about to buy was never quite explained.

Glen Johnson left, Peter Crouch rejoined Harry Redknapp at Spurs, Sylvain Distin was signed to fill the hole left by Lescott at Goodison Park and the Pompey chief executive, Peter Storrie, finally admitted that the club had been facing major financial difficulties because the banks had demanded their very substantial loans back.

Gabara said not to worry, his client would sign players in January. Portsmouth began with five straight defeats, nil points at the bottom of the league, yet again it was difficult to understand why a genuinely rich man would allow that to happen.

It underlined again the obvious modern truth that allowing football clubs to be available to sundry international buyers is a random process. If you get breathlessly lucky, you get Sheikh Mansour, who can turn blue moon to gold. If you are desperate, and unfortunate, a bloke like Al Fahim arrives in jeans and an away top with questions buzzing around his head.

Yet anybody tempted to conclude that "foreign" ownership sums up the problem needs to remember that in the roulette wheel of takeovers between 2005 and 2009, only one club, Newcastle, was taken over by a football-loving Englishman: Mike Ashley...and his reign turned out to be the most calamitous of all. ●

"One player after another sprinted through the Fratton Park exit. Why a multimillionaire, with money to spend, would allow that to happen was never quite explained"

HEROES...

FIORENTINA
Security at the Italian club's Champions League qualifier against Sporting Lisbon was handled exclusively by the club's own stewards with no police presence required.

FABIO CAPELLO
Two years on from a home defeat to Croatia that signalled the end of Steve McClaren's reign as coach, the Italian helped England forget all about the "wally with the brolly".

England expects...Capello

Better late than never...Latif

ISMAEEL LATIF
Scorer of Bahrain's equaliser in the third minute of added time after Saudi Arabia had taken the lead just two minutes earlier.

PEDRO RODRIGUEZ
Barcelona's Super Cup saviour scored a 115th-minute winner against Shakhtar Donetsk.

Glory boy...Pedro

& VILLAINS

JUAN SEBASTIAN VERON
Back in favour for Argentina after the "retirement" of Juan Roman Riquelme, but sent off in the crucial World Cup qualifier against Paraguay.

Marching orders...Veron

Banned...Adebayor made his mark against his old team-mates

EMMANUEL ADEBAYOR
The Manchester City forward faced a lengthy suspension after stamping on his former Arsenal team-mate Robin Van Persie and celebrating his goal provocatively in front of fans.

PADDY KENNY
The Sheffield United and Republic of Ireland goalkeeper was banned for nine months after testing positive for ephedrine, which he claimed was contained in a medicine that was bought over-the-counter.

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Luciano Spalletti

Roma coach quits after defeat to Juventus

ITALY

NO ONE CAN EVER suggest that the 2009-2010 Italian season got off to a quiet start. Within two rounds of matches, Internazionale had already stuffed cousins Milan 4-0 in the first Milanese derby of the season, while consecutive defeats against Genoa and Juventus had prompted Roma coach Luciano Spalletti to resign.

Villain of the piece was the "open draw" used this year by the Football League. There was a time when instructions were fed to the computer drawing up the fixture list to make sure there were no "hot" games, such as city derbies or clashes between title contenders, on the opening days.

Not so this year, with two of the "hottest" games of the year – the Milan derby and the Roma v Juventus clash – coming on Day 2. At this point Luciano Spalletti might wish for the old system.

In truth, Spalletti and Roma were always going to have a hard time, no matter how the fixture list panned out. Reportedly £250million in debt and seemingly forever on the verge of financial meltdown, Roma's most significant summer market move was to sell talented midfielder Alberto Aquilani to Liverpool. Put another way, the club already looked headed for a difficult and uncertain time.

A 3-2 defeat away to Genoa on the opening day and a 3-1 home loss to Juventus seem to have convinced Spalletti that the time had come to jump ship. Sources close to Roma suggest that tensions with club owners, the Sensi family, with the club's biggest star, Francesco Totti, and with sections of the fans all finally became too much for Spalletti.

Whatever his reasons, Spalletti resigned two days after the defeat by Juventus, and in the process walked away from a salary compensation that could have reached £6.4m. Spalletti explained this latter decision by implying that anyone who knew the full economic picture at Roma would not want to hurt the club by looking for such an onerous "out of work" salary.

Spalletti leaves some very good memories behind him. Not only were Roma the only side to seriously chase Inter in recent seasons but, in the process, they also played the most attractive football seen in Italy in the third millennium. Spalletti's Roma also provided contrasting Champions League moments, going from a 7-1 thrashing by Manchester United at Old Trafford to a 2-1 defeat of Real Madrid at the Bernabeu.

The Roma fans may soon come to regret his departure as his successor, former Chelsea and Juventus coach Claudio Ranieri, has already made it clear that his team will be a lot more about "pragmatism" and less about "champagne" football. Ranieri faces a difficult task with a squad that lacks a genuine goalscoring centre-forward, which has lost a real talent in Aquilani and often seems hopelessly obsessed with its ageing talisman captain, Totti, who is now 33.

For many, the Roma-Juventus game marked the passing of a very particular baton; the role of the major challenger to reigning champions Inter seeming to have definitively moved from Rome to Turin.

Republic of Ireland manager Giovanni Trapattoni, someone who has coached and won with both Juve and Inter, has no doubts and says: "Juve are ready to win the *scudetto*. They've shown that by being able to go and win in Rome."

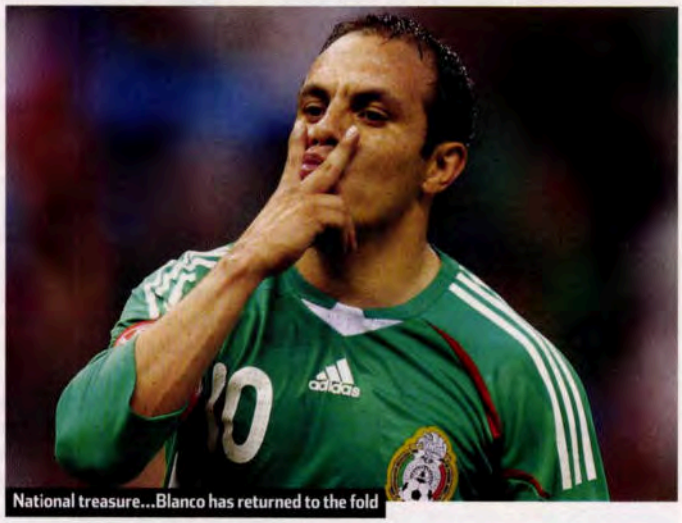
Paddy Agnew

Arrivederci...Spalletti has said goodbye to Roma

Cuauhtemoc Blanco

Veteran forward back at the heart of the Tricolor

MEXICO



National treasure...Blanco has returned to the fold

LIFE IS SWEET for Cuauhtemoc Blanco. After a turbulent few months, which included a short-lived retirement from international football, the 36-year-old has returned to the Tricolor and become the engine behind the revival of Javier Aguirre's side.

In September last year, the mercurial playmaker was discovered by the then-national coach Sven Goran Eriksson arriving late – and with alcohol on his breath – at the squad's camp before a qualifying game. Confronted by the Swede, Blanco quit the Mexico set-up.

Yet another chapter had been written in a career in which Blanco has been brilliant on the pitch but quite childish off it. This wasn't the first time he had left the team after a late-night adventure: in 2001 he missed a plane before a friendly against Spain, blamed the Mexican FA and declared loudly that he would never again wear the green shirt.

However, just like back then, Aguirre has made him return to his senses. Since returning to the helm in April 2009, the 51 year-old coach made it a priority to bring back Blanco – and a few days later the player again wore his beloved no10 shirt for the World Cup qualifier against El Salvador.

Since then, "el Cuauh" has assumed a crucial starting role. After defeat in San Salvador, Mexico won their next three qualifying matches and moved from fifth to second in the CONCACAF qualifying group.

He may have lost some pace and can look out of step in a lightning-quick team that includes Carlos Vela, Giovani Dos Santos and Andres Guardado, but his exquisite technical attributes, vision and *picardia mexicana* ("Mexican naughtiness", as he calls it) are still intact.

He scored a penalty and was man of the match in a vital victory over Honduras in September. With two minutes left, he pretended to be injured, thus giving a breather to the team. As he left on a stretcher, he raised his head and smiled at the fans, who gave him an ovation.

The Tricolor need one more win to book their ticket to South Africa – a perfect setting for their best player of the past 15 years to bow out.

Martin Del Palacio Langer

Axel Witsel
Standard Liege forward in the dock over horror tackle

BELGIUM

EUROPEAN FOUL of the Season? If such a dubious award existed, Standard Liege's current Belgian Footballer of the Year, Alex Witsel, would surely be a contender after the over-the-top stamp which broke the right leg of Anderlecht's Polish full-back Marcin Wasilewski.

Witsel, who received a red card for the horror tackle, claimed the challenge was not premeditated and that he had not deliberately set out to injure Wasilewski, a tough defender who was caught on camera elbowing a Standard player in last season's league title play-off.

"I badly controlled a ball but thought I could still make up the ground to recover it," explained Witsel. "At the last moment I saw someone surge in. There wasn't enough time for me to know who it was. It all happened too quickly.

"We were both going for the ball. It was involuntary on my part. Of course, I regret Wasilewski's serious injury. I'm not a nasty person. I don't play football to break legs."

However, the slow-motion images of the incident were damning. As Wasilewski slid in, Witsel appeared to disregard the ball, launching himself with a straight leg and bringing his entire weight down onto the lower limb of his victim.

The sports committee of the Belgian federation had no doubts as to the seriousness of the offence. Witsel was banned for 11 games and fined £22,000, though on appeal the punishment was reduced to eight matches and a somewhat comical £220. His suspension only applies to domestic first-team fixtures so he is not barred from his club's Champions League campaign.

As for Wasilewski, he will be sidelined for much longer. So far he has undergone three operations to repair the double fracture of tibia and fibula, and he is expected to be out for at least 10 months. There are even concerns that he may never play again.

Despite the reduction in sentence, Standard remain extremely unhappy with what they consider to be Witsel's trial by media. They also feel the authorities were wrong to conclude the Belgium international had done the deed on purpose.

"The federation's legal team initially said they could not be certain of intent," declared Standard chief executive Pierre Francois. "Then they say he meant it. They have criminalised the act of Axel Witsel in a way which should not be tolerated. This is the sort of justice which took place in the Middle Ages when people were made examples of. The fact he is a talented sportsman worked against him.

"He's been told he must change his mentality. But what can he change? He has a good mentality and didn't mean to hurt anyone."

Witsel, too, was of the opinion he had been harshly treated, claiming: "I know I've made a mistake and have to pay for it, but the sanction is exaggerated. They want to paint me as someone I'm not. I'm no killer."

The affair has completely taken over the Belgian news agenda: the updates on Wasilewski's recovery, the possibility of a private prosecution, the death threats sent to Witsel, the attempts of Standard's shirt sponsors (mobile phone company BASE) to distance themselves from the fall-out.

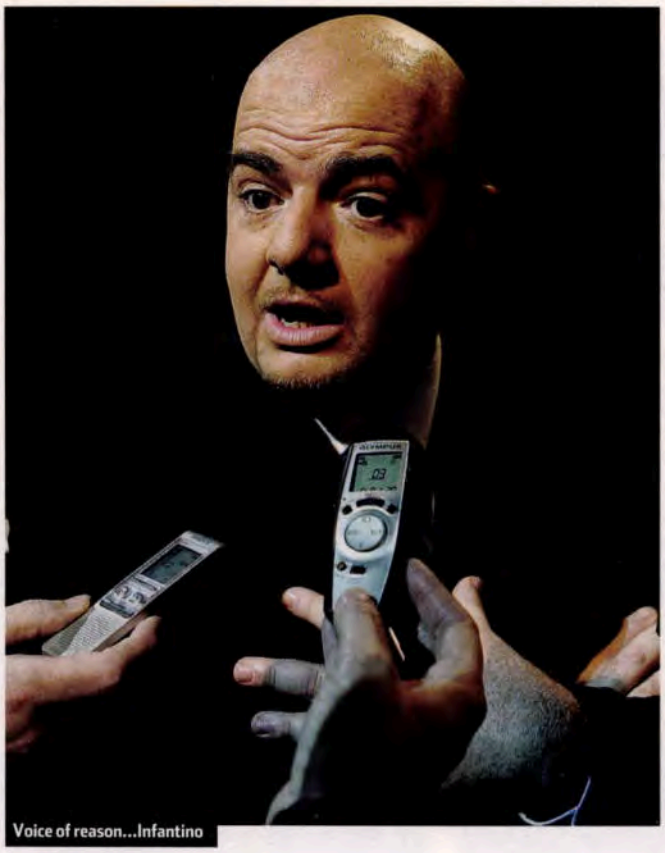
Cast as Public Enemy No1, Witsel has been pilloried mercilessly in the media and a favourite line of attack is to suggest that the 20-year-old has had too much fame and fortune too soon.

Utter nonsense. What really set the scene for his ugly lunge is the climate of hatred engendered by Standard-Anderlecht games these days. The fans are at daggers drawn and the players clearly have no respect for each other either. Witsel was not the only guilty party in a game which, from start to finish, was uncontrollable and brimming over with rampant machismo and rash challenges.

A rapprochement between these two bitter rivals has to be a matter of urgency.

Nick Bidwell

Over the top...Witsel's horrific challenge on Wasilewski


Voice of reason...Infantino

Gianni Infantino
UEFA legal chief promoted to general secretary role

SWITZERLAND

GIANNI INFANTINO is the Italian lawyer to whom UEFA president Michel Platini – not known as a details man – turns to when he needs somebody to explain the specifics of a policy.

Infantino, who has replaced David Taylor as UEFA general secretary, was previously the European governing body's head of legal affairs and licensing, and he has worked at UEFA since 2000.

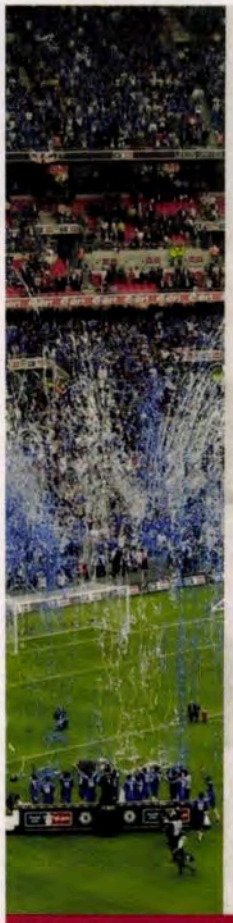
At the Champions League draw and Supercup match in Monaco, Infantino was the UEFA official called in to brief the media on Platini's new plan to control clubs' spending.

While Platini talked in broad terms of his mission to ensure "financial fair play", Infantino explained the detail of UEFA's three-year plan to force clubs taking part in their competitions to break even and spend only from "football-generated revenues".

A central plank of the plan will be the creation of a Club Financial Control Panel, chaired by former Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene, which will try to ensure clubs comply with the new rules.

Taylor, a former chief executive of the Scottish Football Association, joined UEFA in 2007 following Platini's election. He now becomes chief executive of the yet-to-be-named marketing company that will be responsible for UEFA's business and commercial operations.

Gavin Hamilton



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Keir Radnedge

Platini's big gamble

The UEFA president is playing a dangerous game in trying to tame club finances

CRITICISING Michel Platini is a little like criticising Nelson Mandela. It's just not done. In the case of Platini this is partly out of loyalty to his superb playing career, partly out of respect for his undisputed love of the game and partly for his engaging persona.

However, events surrounding this season's Champions League group draw raised intriguing questions about the direction in which the European federation's president is leading the game and, beyond that even, what actually is UEFA's purpose?

Platini came to power on a manifesto that promised the medium and smaller nations greater access to the levers of power and big-tournament presence.

Hence we now have:

- A European federation which appears to be locked suicidally into taking its Euro 2012 flagship to the recession-battered and politically confused co-hosting partnership of Poland and Ukraine.
- A Champions League whose groups are even more tediously unbalanced now the doors have swung open to the minnows of pot four. (Why not offer one slot to the winners of a president's lottery featuring the champions of, say, Albania, Moldova, Liechtenstein and Andorra?)
- A Champions League with even more dead matches in the last two rounds which, in these recessionary times, may one day prompt a slumbering TV boss to demand some of his millions back.
- A proposal to ban from European competition all those clubs who cannot, in three years' time, present a balanced accounts sheet.

It's tempting to wonder whether Platini will ever truly be happy until the Champions League dumbing down presents us with a Final between APOEL Nicosia and Spora Luxembourg.

Cause for concern...Platini (centre) is quizzed by Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger (left) and Manchester United's Alex Ferguson

The books-balanced wheeze is the one which – if we do accept the promotional creed that the Barcelonas, Madrids and Manchesters really should be seen taking their football gospel to the lands of the minnows – must set alarm bells ringing.

Cash-strapped minnows

And which cash-strapped minnows want such a system? Platini says: "It's mainly the owners who asked to do something: Roman Abramovich [Chelsea], Silvio Berlusconi [Milan], Massimo Moratti [Internazionale]. They do not want to fork out any more."

Do not want to fork out any more? More like cannot.

Abramovich's vast fortune has taken a (comparative) bruising in the recession, while Berlusconi and Moratti have realised too late that the collapsed Italian financial model is not merely prehistoric but antediluvian.

And for Berlusconi to whinge about big spenders is the height of hypocrisy.

This is the man who, in the mid-1980s, turned Milan from near-bankruptcy into European champions by throwing at the club some £20million – which in those days equated to something like Florentino Perez's £200m splurge at Real Madrid today, rather than a sum which now buys little more than a modest England right-back. Anyway, despite denials from his mansion at Arcore, all the signs are that Berlusconi is tightening down the hatches to sell.

As for Abramovich, the man then-Arsenal chief executive

"Has Platini forgotten the lessons from powerful clubs in his own backyard?"

Read more from Keir Radnedge at worldsoccer.com

David Dein accused of "parking his tanks on our lawn and firing £50 notes at us", is merely upset at being outspent.

UEFA is a highly successful administrator of competitions. That is its prime purpose. Yet it risks heading into ill-defined spheres which will not encourage thrift but criminality.

Has Platini forgotten the lessons from his own (French) backyard? How even powerful clubs such as Bordeaux and Saint-Etienne systematically diverted local government subsidies for their community and youth projects into slush funds which were used to pay under-the-counter transfer inducements? How clubs such as Paris Saint-Germain lured players through bypassing high tax rates with the artifice of (untaxed) image rights deals?

Ill-appointed regulations

The more arbitrary, complex and ill-appointed the financial regulations the more the probability of loopholes.

Here we have not so much a loophole but a chasm. Platini says debt accumulated for stadia building will be acceptable. Prepare for a flood of high-price stadia redevelopment proposals...and who knows where significant slices of such monies will really go?

Who can police them? Certainly not UEFA, who are a sports federation, not a police force or one of the world's multinational forensic accountants.

Hate them or despise them, the least that can be said about the likes of Abramovich, Moratti and Perez is that they put wonderful football teams on the pitch twice a week.

Does UEFA do that? No. Platini would say that it provides the competitive context. But for how long? Not for too many more years at this rate.

Fellow Frenchman Arsene Wenger may have been too cautious in thinking it could be 10 years before the big clubs create a European league. And not necessarily with UEFA's blessing.

If that happened, the players will be outside the FIFA family and will thus risk missing the World Cup. On the other hand, turn that argument on its head. FIFA needs the likes of Messi, Rooney and Ronaldo at the World Cup. Could the big clubs go to Zurich over UEFA's head?

Criticism of the direction of UEFA under Platini is hard to find. It's as if everyone remains so mesmerised by respect that he is beyond question.

I yield to no one in my admiration of Platini's will to do the very best for the game which gave him so much. My point is that, unnecessarily, he may be playing a far more dangerous game than he realises. ●

Big match referee...the animosity between Jordaan (left) and Khoza (centre) worries Blatter

Sepp's little problem

FIFA IS WORRIED that the World Cup organisers could take their eye off the ball in the run-up to, and in the aftermath of, the South African FA presidential election at the end of September.

Confusing and upsetting all the world authority's carefully laid plans is the association's presidential battle between the local World Cup organising chairman, Ivan Khoza, and the organising chief executive, Danny Jordaan.

Accusations and counter-accusations have been growing ever more bitter – which is exactly what Sepp Blatter feared.

Blatter has entrusted his entire personal credibility as FIFA president in a successful African World Cup next summer. How Khoza and Jordaan could work together in peace and harmony after all the mud which has been thrown around is hard to imagine.

Meanwhile, concerns over the personal security of travelling fans refuse to go away. A bleak and disturbing picture has been set out in travel advice from the UK government's Foreign Office.

Cautionary notes include the usual concerns about the need for comprehensive health insurance and the importance of booking accommodation in advance because many hotels and guest houses are full already.

The Foreign Office adds: "There is a relatively high level of crime in South African cities, as in all large cities. Passport theft is common so be aware and make sure you keep copies of your passport and documents separately in case they are stolen."

Risks on the road are also highlighted.

"Carjacking is common in cities and around airports, and the local police recommend you do not try to resist if you are attacked," says the Foreign Office in a paragraph which begins, almost ironically considering what follows: "Driving standards in South Africa differ to the UK. Think carefully about whether you need to drive when abroad, and if you do make sure you are aware of local road laws and take out comprehensive insurance."

Jordaan has continued to offer reassurances that fans will be safe because the match schedule will pinpoint where they are.

But what about ordinary South Africans, who will lack such logistical protection?

Perhaps SAFA and SALOC (the association and organising committee) should take a leaf out of the World Anti-Doping Agency's code and launch its own "whereabouts" system. Then every Bafana Bafana fan can text Jordaan every day so he will know where they are.

But that is an issue for next June. First Jordaan has Khoza to worry about...while Blatter sits in Zurich worrying about them both.

Talent on tap

The global transfer ban imposed on Chelsea for the poaching of Gael Kakuta has opened a huge can of worms, says Gavin Hamilton

CHELSEA HAVE been punished by FIFA for their signing of teenager Gael Kakuta from Lens – and once again the spotlight is turned on the controversial subject of teenagers being poached by Premier League clubs.

The London club have vowed to appeal against a ban on signing players until the January 2011 transfer window and a fine of £870,000 for signing France youth international Kakuta, in 2007, after he had turned 16 but before he had agreed a professional contract with Lens, the club he had trained with from the age of nine.

Reports in France suggested that Kakuta was offered an annual contract worth more than £1million by Chelsea. "I don't blame Gael," says Gregory Daudas, the coach of Kakuta's schoolboy side in Moulins. "Some offers you can't turn down."

The matter was referred to FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber after Lens registered a formal complaint with the world governing body. However, the timing of the decision and the severity of the punishment handed out has shocked many.

"I am surprised by the harshness of the punishment," said ex-Lens defender Jean-Marc Adjovi-Bocco. "If it's upheld, Chelsea are in trouble. But perhaps it's the only way to force the big clubs to respect the rules."

Chelsea are no strangers to controversy when it comes to the recruitment of young players. In 2005, they were accused of tapping up Leeds teenagers Michael Woods and Tom Taiwo and were forced to pay £5m in compensation.

In 2006, head of scouting Frank Arnesen, who has since been promoted to sporting director, was secretly filmed by the BBC offering £150,000 to Middlesbrough starlet Nathan Porritt, then aged 15.

Then, last year Reggina reported Chelsea to the Italian FA and UEFA over an approach to 15-year-old Vincenzo Camilleri.

Central to Chelsea's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) will be the legal status of Kakuta's pre-contract with Lens. Chelsea may also cite the example of Charles N'Zogbia, who signed for Newcastle United aged 17 from Le Havre in 2004. The French club claimed they had an "educational contract" that tied him to the club and complained to FIFA. The transfer was cleared by FIFA but Newcastle were ordered to pay around £250,000 in compensation.

Le Havre took the case to CAS, who ordered Newcastle to pay additional compensation in the region of £320,000. Earlier this year, Newcastle sold N'Zogbia to Wigan for £6m.

Controversial case

Some have suggested that the severity of Chelsea's punishment is linked to the controversial case involving Nigerian teenager John Obi Mikel, who joined Chelsea in 2006 after sums of £12m and £4m were paid to Manchester United and Norwegian club Lyn Oslo respectively.

Chelsea and United had both claimed contracts with Mikel, one of the stars of the 2005 Under-20 World Cup, and it was suggested that Mikel had been "parked" in Norway to bypass FIFA regulations banning the international transfer of Under-18s.

FIFA introduced the rule in 2001 but nobody has ever been punished. There are two exceptions to the regulations: for players moving within the European Union, and for players whose parents move to the country in which his new club is located for reasons not linked to football.

The "non-footballing reasons" argument has been used on a number of occasions. For example, the case of Mexican striker Carlos Vela, who joined Arsenal last year having been loaned out to Spanish clubs Celta Vigo, Salamanca and Osasuna. To comply with FIFA regulations, Vela's family, whose home in Cancun had been damaged by a hurricane, were relocated to Vigo.

> "Only three English clubs have no foreign teenagers on their books"

However, it is teenagers moving within European Union borders – and specifically from France, Spain and Italy to England – who form the bulk of the most controversial cases, including that of Kakuta.

Chelsea are by no means the only leading English club who are signing overseas teenagers. Indeed, only three English clubs – Burnley, Sunderland and Wolves – have no foreign teenagers on their books.

Next season, the Premier League's proposed quota system – whereby eight members of each squad will have to be under the age of 21 and will have to have been with an English or Welsh club for three years – will intensify the global search for young talent.

Arsenal led the way with the signing of Nicolas Anelka from Paris Saint-Germain in 1997. He has been followed by the likes of Cesc Fabregas

Early starter...Macheda joined United at 16

Read more on the Kakuta affair at worldsoccer.com

In the spotlight...Kakuta has been at Chelsea since 2007

and Fran Merida from Barcelona and a string of others.

Italian teenager Federico Macheda, who emerged last season to play a crucial role in Manchester United's Premier League campaign, was signed at 16 from Lazio, while Gerard Pique joined United for free aged 17 from Barcelona, who paid around £6million to re-sign him last year.

In all these cases, English clubs have taken advantage of European labour laws which allow players to be signed at 16 even though they cannot sign professional contracts with the clubs who developed them until they have turned 18.

After Macheda made a dramatic debut for United, scoring an injury-time winner against Aston Villa, Lazio president Claudio Lotito hit out at the English club, saying: "All these players are robbed as a matter of course by this club. They go to the parents and give them money and important jobs. These are boys who come from poor families. The families base their choices on economic interests.

"It's not moral. It is like a cattle market. The young players are treated like cattle."

Similar complaints

The Kakuta case has prompted a number of similar complaints, with Roma technical director Bruno Conti criticising Manchester United over the signing of 16-year-old Davide Petrucci last year.

"They complain about [Cristiano] Ronaldo and then did the same thing with Davide," argues Conti. "His father, Stefano, has disappointed me. I will not be told any more lies."

Roma received around £200,000 in compensation for Petrucci, but French club Le Havre are angry that they have received nothing from United for 16-year-old midfielder Paul Pogba.

Le Havre president Jean-Pierre Louvel alleges: "They tempt the parents. In the case of Paul Pogba, it was fairly simple. One hundred thousands euros for the father, one hundred thousand euros for the mother, and a house.

"France respects a certain number of rules, but English clubs do not respect anything."

Across town, Manchester City face a complaint from another French club, Rennes, over the signing of 17-year-old defender Jeremy Helan.

The French club are pursuing their claim based on the existence of a pre-contracts – the so-called *contrat aspirant*, a type of French contract which ties a minor to the club which has nurtured him.

While the French argue over contracts, others have used more emotive language. Former Brazil captain Carlos Alberto attacked United for the signing of Brazilian twins Rafael and Fabio Da Silva, amid reports that the English club had agreed to sign teenage defender Dodo from Corinthians when he turns 18.

"It is disgraceful United are allowed to rape Brazilian football," he said. "The big teams have the money and can take our best players. The clubs cannot keep good young players because they can make much more money in other countries."

But the issue is not restricted to England. Fiorentina have been ordered by FIFA to pay Le Havre more than £500,000 for illegally recruiting one of their teenage players in 2006. Matthias Lepiller was 18 when he left Le Havre for Italy after training at the club's academy and being offered a contract.

Bayern Munich president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has been scathing about Arsene Wenger's transfer policy, calling it "kidnapping" and "child trafficking". But two years ago the German club brought a 13-year-old Peruvian, Pier Larrauri Corry, to Germany. Dubbed the "new Maradona", he was supposed to spend a season in Munich "to see how it goes" but things did not work out. He was homesick and only took part in two or three training sessions.

Barcelona, who famously signed Lionel Messi aged 13 from Argentina, signed 12-year-old Leverkusen schoolboy midfielder Dennis Krol in 2005. His father moved with

One that got away from United...Mikel

him to Catalonia. However, he struggled to develop as Barca had hoped and returned to Leverkusen early this year.

Meanwhile, French clubs are not exempt from criticism in the recruitment of youngsters.

Jean-Michel Larque, the former Saint-Etienne midfielder turned TV commentator, says: "We must not only look at the transfer methods of top European clubs. We also have to consider the attitude of French club directors to African youngsters. I note too that French boys of 14, 15 and 16 go to Spanish clubs and neither FIFA or UEFA put a brake on this."

Former Lens defender Adjovi-Bocco acknowledges: "We know what goes on between French and African clubs, even though it's forbidden to transfer a minor."

Better to be patient

However, not all teenagers are lured by financial offers. Romelu Lukaku (see Talent Scout, page 73), has turned down offers from major European clubs to stay at Anderlecht.

"Arsenal, Inter and especially Chelsea were interested," his father Roger Lukaku told Belgian daily *La Derniere Heure*. "It wasn't obvious to say no because Romelu is a big Chelsea fan. But he's been looked after so well at Anderlecht that it was better to be patient. Money does not come into it.

"When you're offered a house or a car abroad, is it so special? The boy's development is more important."

Five years ago, when River Plate's attacking prodigy Erik Lamela was 12, he was a target for Barcelona, who offered his parents jobs and the kid an annual salary of £100,000. River persuaded him to stay and he recently made his first-team debut. At the time, Spanish daily *AS* described Barca's tactics as "footballing paedophilia".

So where do we go from here? While Chelsea pursue their appeal and other clubs consult their lawyers, UEFA and FIFA are persisting with a plan to ban under-18 transfers completely. A European legal minefield lies ahead.

"We must have an international transfer commission for minors and it has to be rigorous," says Larque. "You can put three million on the table but if the boy is not allowed to play, the temptation to emigrate doesn't exist."

But Arsene Wenger is unhappy at such a prospect. "If you ban players from moving before they are 18, you know what will happen? The player will be sold anyway," he retorts. "And to whom? To agents. At 13 or 14. Where will they go? Not to top-level clubs where they might receive a top-level education, but to clubs who have been bought by business people, of a very low level, where they will stay until the age of 18 waiting to be sold.

"If you have a child who is a good musician, what is your first reaction? It is to put the child into a good music school, not an average one. Why should that not happen in football?"

Better, clearer, more structured compensation for clubs who develop promising players is the crucial issue. "People should be compensated as much as possible," says Wenger.

Buried in the depths of the FIFA website is a document entitled "Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players". As well as the regulations banning the international transfer of under-18 players, it contains a complicated formula for calculating "training compensation". Few recruiting clubs will have paid much attention to such a process, nor has FIFA attempted to enforce it.

As Chelsea continue their appeal to CAS, they already appear to have found a way round the global transfer ban. Reports from Zagreb suggested Chelsea have agreed a £2million fee for an option to sign 17-year-old goalkeeper Matej Delac from Inter Zapresic. Delac will stay in Croatia until 2011 but Chelsea will pay his wages and he will travel to London to train at Chelsea whenever possible.

You feel we haven't heard the last of this. ●

PROFILE: Gael Kakuta

Caught in a storm

"I WAS NEVER GOING to forget a young player like him. Even at the age of seven he was different, way above the norm." Gregory Daudus, the coach of the schoolboy side at Moulins in the suburbs of Lille, says he always had a feeling that a seven-year-old of Congolese descent by the name of Gael Kakuta was going to make it big in the football world.

Despite losing his first match 19-1, Gael quickly put the setback behind him and after a string of precocious attacking displays on the Moulins astroturf, he was asked a year later to join the youth set-up of local pro club Racing Club de Lens, where he effortlessly rose through the ranks of the La Gaillette academy, proving himself a most promising left-sided midfielder, a virtuoso on the ball, explosive in his movement, imaginative and just as competent making as taking chances.

As he made his way through his teens, rumours began to circulate in and around Lens that he was being watched by big-name foreign clubs and in April 2007, his club went as far as to issue a denial on their website that he would soon be leaving for England. A few months later, not long after his 16th birthday he did just that, opting to join Chelsea. His reward? A reported signing-on fee of €1million and a monthly salary of £25,000. French sources also suggest his mother received a flat.

A furious Lens president Gervais Martel immediately lodged an appeal to FIFA, claiming the youngster had been "stolen". At the age, of 14 Gael and his father had signed a deferred *contrat aspirant*. Such an agreement was supposed to oblige Gael to turn pro with Lens at 16. But on reaching this particular milestone, his father refused to play ball. The decision had been made for Gael to head for Stamford Bridge instead.

In London Kakuta has turned out to be a great success, catching the eye for Chelsea Under-18s and reserves.

Unfortunately his progress was halted early this year when he broke his left leg and ankle in a reserve game. He has featured for France at Under-15 and Under-17, helping the latter finish runners-up at the 2008 Euro Championship.

Nick Bidwell

Simpler times...Kakuta at Lens

CONTROVERISIAL DEALS UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

- **Gael KAKUTA**
  Lens to Chelsea
- **Paul POGBA**
  Le Havre to Manchester United
- **Jeremy HELAN**
  Rennes to Man City
- **Matthias LEPILLER**
  Le Havre to Fiorentina
- **Michele FORNASIER**
  Empoli to Man United
- **Vincenzo CAMILLERI**
  Reggina to Chelsea

New Blue...Kakuta

Left Le Havre...Lepiller

City hopeful...Helan

TAKEN AT 16

The players signed by English clubs before their home clubs could do a deal

- **Cesc FABREGAS**
  Barcelona to Arsenal
- **Fran MERIDA**
  Barcelona to Arsenal
- **Gerard PIQUE**
  Barcelona to Man United
- **Federico MACHEDA**
  Lazio to Man United
- **Alberto MASSACCI**
  Empoli to Man United
- **Davide PETRUCCI**
  Roma to Man United

Barcelona youth 1999...Pique (top) and Fabregas

24 Biggest-

Where the serious money went in this summer's transfer market

Welcome hug...Kaka became the first of the new galacticos at Real Madrid

1 REAL MADRID
SPAIN
£143.5million

IN: Cristiano Ronaldo (Man Utd, £80m); Kaka (Milan, £57m); Karim Benzema (Lyon, £30m); Xabi Alonso (Liverpool, £30m); Raul Albiol (Valencia, £13m); Alvaro Negredo (Almeria, £4.5m); Alvaro Arbeloa (Liverpool, £3m); Esteban Granero (Getafe, £3m)
OUT: Arjen Robben (Bayern, £21.8m); Alvaro Negredo (Sevilla, £15m); Klaas-Jan Huntelaar (Milan, £13m); Wesley Sneijder (Inter, £13m); Javi Garcia (Benfica, £6m); Javier Saviola (Benfica, £4.3m); Dani Parejo (Getafe, £2.6m); Gabriel Heinze (Marseille, £1.3m)

2 MANCHESTER CITY
ENGLAND
£98m

IN: Carlos Tevez (Man Utd, £25.5m); Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal, £25m); Joleon Lescott (Everton, £22m); Roque Santa Cruz (Blackburn, £18m); Kolo Toure (Arsenal, £16m); Gareth Barry (Aston Villa, £12m)
OUT: Elano (Galatasaray, £8m); Richard Dunne (Aston Villa, £6m); Ched Evans (£3m, Sheffield Utd); Gelson Fernandes (£2m, St-Etienne); Kasper Schmeichel (£1.5m, Notts County)

3 BARCELONA
SPAIN
£74.75m

IN: Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Inter, £57.5m); Dmitry Chygrinsky (Shakhtar Donetsk, £21.8m); Keirrison (Palmeiras, £12.3m); Maxwell (Inter, £3.9m)
OUT: Samuel Eto'o (Inter, £17.5m); Alex Hleb (Stuttgart, £1.8m); Eidur Gudjohnsen (Monaco, £1m); Martin Caceres (Juventus, £450,000)

4 BAYERN MUNICH
GERMANY
£53.42m

IN: Mario Gomez (Stuttgart, £26.2m); Arjen Robben (Real Madrid, £21.8m); Anatoliy Timouschuk (Zenit, £12.2m); Danijel Pranjic (Heerenveen, £6.1m); Edson Braafheid (Twente, £1.7m)
OUT: Lukas Podolski (Koln, £8.7m); Lucio (Inter, £5.2m); Tim Borowski (Bremen, £680,000)

5 NAPOLI
ITALY
£43.75m

IN: Fabio Quagliarella (Udinese, £16.9m); Luca Cigarini (Atalanta, £10.1m); Juan Zuniga (Siena, £7.2m); Armando Campagnaro (Sampdoria, £6.7m); Erwin Hoffer (Rapid Vienna, £5m); Morgan De Sanctis (Sevilla, £1.25m)
OUT: Daniele Mannini (Sampdoria, £3.4m)

6 JUVENTUS
ITALY
£36.55m

IN: Felipe Melo (Fiorentina, £21.2m); Diego (Werder Bremen, £20.8m); Fabio Grosso (Lyon, £1.7m); Martin Caceres (Barcelona, £450,000)
OUT: Marco Marchionni (Fiorentina, £3.8m); Olof Mellberg (Olympiakos, £2.1m); Cristiano Zanetti (Fiorentina, £1.7m)

7 FENERBAHCE
TURKEY
£24.3m

IN: Andre Santos (Corinthians, £7.6m); Cristian (Corinthians, £6.3m); Mehmet Topuz (Kayserispor, £4.3m); Ozer Hurmaci (Ankaraspor, £4 m); Fabio Bilica (Sivasspor, £2.1m)

8 ASTON VILLA
ENGLAND
£24.1m

IN: Stewart Downing (Middlesbrough, £12m); Stephen Warnock (Blackburn, £8m); Richard Dunne (Man City, £6m); Fabian Delph (Leeds, £6m); James Collins (West Ham, £5m); Habib Beye (Newcastle, £2.6m)
OUT: Gareth Barry (Man City, £12m); Zat Knight (Bolton, £3.5m)

9 HAMBURG
GERMANY
£20.73m

IN: Marcus Berg (Groningen, £8.7m); Eljero Elia (Twente, £7.6m); David Rozehnal (Lazio, £4.6m)
OUT: Rouwen Hennings (St Pauli, £170,000)

10 BESIKTAS
TURKEY
£20.7m

IN: Rodrigo Tabata (Gaziantepspor, £6.7m); Ismael Koybasi (Gaziantepspor, £5m); Matteo Ferrari (Genoa, £4.2m); Nihat Kaveci (Villarreal, £3.8m); Michael Fink (Eintracht Frankfurt, £1m)

Almeria to Madrid to Sevilla...Negredo

11 SEVILLA
SPAIN
£19.65m

IN: Alvaro Negredo (Real Madrid, £15m); Didier Zokora (Spurs, £7m); Sergio Sanchez (Espanyol, £3.4m)
OUT: Mosquero (America, £3.5m); Morgan Di Sanctis (Napoli, £1.25m); Enzo Maresca (Olympiakos, £1m)

spending clubs

Brazilian buy...Ramires

12 BENFICA
PORTUGAL
£19.54m

IN: Ramires (Cruzeiro, £6.3m); Javi Garcia (Real Madrid, £6m); Javier Saviola (Real Madrid, £4.3m); Patric (Sao Caetano, £1.5m); Felipe Menezes (Goias, £1.3m); Jose Shaffer (Racing Club, £1.3m); Julio Cesar (Belenenses, £430,000); Cesar Peixoto (Braga, £340,000); Weldon (Sport Recife, £170,000)
OUT: Kostas Katsouranis (Panathinaikos, £2.1m)

13 BIRMINGHAM CITY
ENGLAND
£17.575m

IN: Christian Benitez (Santos Laguna, £7.7m); Roger Johnson (Cardiff, £5m); Scott Dann (Coventry, £3.5m), Barry Ferguson (Rangers, £1m); Giovanny Espinoza (Barcelona, Ecu, £375,000)

14 BORDEAUX
FRANCE
16.64m

IN: Yoann Gourcuff (Milan, £12.7m); Juan Carraso (Toulouse, £8.7m); Jaroslav Plasil (Osasuna, £2.54m)
OUT: Souleymane Diawara (Marseille, £4.3m); Gabriel Obertan (Man Utd, £3m)

15 LYON
FRANCE
£16.4m

IN: Lisandro Lopez (Porto, £20.5m); Michel Bastos (Lille, £15.2m); Aly Cissokho (Porto, £13m); Bafetimbi Gomis (St-Etienne, £11m)
OUT: Karim Benzema (Real Madrid, £30m); Abdul Kader Keita (Galatasaray, £7.2m); Anthony Mounier (Nice, £2.2m), Juninho (Al Gharafa, £2.2m); Fabio Grosso (Juventuss, £1.7m)

16 WOLVES
ENGLAND
£15.8m

IN: Kevin Doyle (Reading, £6m); Nenad Milijas (Red Star Belgrade, £2.5m); Ronald Zubar (Marseille, £2.5m); Greg Halford (Sunderland, £2m); Stefan Maierhofer (Rapid Wien, £1.8m); Andrew Surman (Southampton, £1.2m)
OUT: Elliott Bennett (Brighton, £200,000)

Stars in stripes...Whitehead (left) and Huth

17 STOKE CITY
ENGLAND
£15.25m

IN: Robert Huth (Middlesbrough, £5m); Tuncay Sanli (Middlesbrough, £5m); Dean Whitehead (Sunderland, £3m); Danny Collins (Sunderland, £2.75m); Diego Arizmendi (Nacional, £2.5m)
OUT: Seyi Olofinjana (Hull, £3m)

18 GALATASARAY
TURKEY
£15.2m

IN: Elano (Man City, £8m); Abdul Kader Keita (Lyon, £7.2m)

19 CHELSEA
ENGLAND
£14.45m

IN: Yuri Zhirkov (CSKA Moscow, £18m); Nemanja Matic (Kosice, £1.75m)
OUT: Claudio Pizarro (Werder Bremen, £4.5m); Ben Sahar (Espanyol, £800,000)

20 WOLFSBURG
GERMANY
£14.17m

IN: Obafemi Martins (Newcastle, £8.7m); Karim Ziani (Marseille, £6.3m); Thomas Kahlenberg (Auxerre, £4m); Fabian Johnson (1860 Munich, £870,000)
OUT: Cristian Zaccardo (Parma, £3.6m); Yoshito Okubo (Vissel Kobe, £1.3m); Cedric Makiadi (Freiburg, £800,000)

21 HOFFENHEIM
GERMANY
£13.68m

IN: Josip Simunic (Hertha Berlin, £6m); Franco Zuculini (Racing Avellaneda, £3.9m); Maicosuel Reginaldo (Botafogo, £3.8m)
OUT: Steffen Haas (Offenbach, £20,000)

22 LAZIO
ITALY
£13.5m

IN: Mauro Zarate (Al Sadd, £16.9m); Matuzalem (Zaragoza, £6m); Eliseu (Malaga, £850,000)
OUT: Lorenzo De Silvestri (Fiorentina, £4.8m); David Rozehnal (Hamburg £4.6m); Juan Pablo Carrizo (Zaragoza, £850,000)

23 PANATHINAIKOS
GREECE
£13.28m

IN: Djibril Cisse (Marseille, £8.7m); Sebastian Leto (Liverpool, £3.4m); Kostas Katsouranis (Benfica, £2.1m); Mattias Bjarsmyr (IFK Gothenburg, £380,000)
OUT: Andreas Ivanschitz (Mainz, £1.3 m)

Back to Italy...Moretti

24 GENOA
ITALY
£13.13m

IN: Sergio Floccari (Atalanta, £8.9m); Houssine Kharja (Siena, £5.1m); Rodrigo Palacio (Boca Juniors, £4.7m); Emiliano Moretti (Valencia, £3.8m); Alberto Zapater (Zaragoza, £3.5m); Bosko Jankovic (Palermo, £3m); Andrea Esposito (Lecce, £1.8m); Ivan Fatic (Chievo, £1.7m); Nenad Tomovic (Red Star Belgrade, £1.5m)
OUT: Diego Milito (Inter, £9.3m); Thiago Motta (Inter, £6.1m); Matteo Ferrari (Besiktas, £4.2m); Roberto Acquafresca (Atalanta, £850,000); Matteo Paro (Bari, £420,000)

DISPATCHES

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Dead and buried...Paraguay fans show what they think about Maradona's chances of making the finals

Diego on the edge

Humiliation at home to Brazil has left Maradona's side struggling to qualify for the World Cup

ARGENTINA

REX GOWAR in Rosario

TAKEN AS A single 10-nation group, the South American World Cup qualifiers should always provide a fail-safe passage into the finals for the top teams, and neither Brazil nor Argentina have failed to do so since its creation a decade ago.

However, in 2001 Brazil walked a knife edge until Luiz Felipe Scolari steadied the team, got them through and went on to win the World Cup a year later. And now it is Argentina, who under Marcelo Bielsa won the same qualifying tournament at a canter but failed miserably in Japan in 2002, who are in trouble.

Diego Maradona, hitting out at media criticism of his coaching and the team's performances, reminded them of Argentina's flirtation with elimination in 1985 when they snatched a late draw against Peru at River Plate's Monumental stadium. Less than a year later they had become world champions.

Peru have been at Argentina's crossroads more than once – eliminating them from the 1970 World Cup and losing 6-0 in Rosario during the 1978 finals – and they will be there again, in Buenos Aires, on the second weekend in October in the penultimate qualifier.

While defiant Argentinians say the twice world champions will still qualify, the more pessimistic half of the country think it is now a lost cause. And there are even some – those who dislike Maradona and AFA president Julio Grondona – who would like to see a big failure to usher in a new regime.

Maradona went into the Brazil game determined his team would win and organised what he thought was the right setting, saying the players felt the crowd was distant in the vast River Plate arena and that Argentina would put the Brazilians against the ropes in the compact Rosario Central ground.

It backfired badly because the lessons of recent confrontations, and most particularly the 2007 Copa America Final, were not heeded. Argentina went all out in attack, pinning Brazil into their half, and left themselves exposed at the back.

Caught out badly

Questions were asked of Maradona's practice sessions after Argentina were caught out badly at two set-pieces in the first half. Half an hour gone and they were 2-0 down despite enjoying the lion's share of possession.

In Brazil's first attack, in the 24th minute, a free-kick taken on the right by Elano found the unmarked Luisao who placed his header inside the far post, out of reach of the diving keeper Mariano Andujar.

On the half hour, another quickly taken free-kick out on the left led to a shot from Kaka being parried by Andujar and Luis Fabiano netting the rebound. Brazil coach Dunga later said it was "a victory for technique" and while his side may not play a beautiful game their skill was still present in such precise finishing.

Jesus Datolo looked for a moment like a saviour when he scored with a rare long-range effort. But, within two minutes, Brazil doused the flames of a revival when Kaka split the thin defence with a fine pass behind Nicolas Otamendi and Luis Fabiano chipped over Andujar.

The cheers of "Dunga, Dunga" that rang out as the final whistle approached did not come exclusively from the small group of yellow-bedecked Brazilian fans. Argentina were seen to have failed badly and many were worried that a

Forlorn...Maradona contemplates defeat by Brazil

better-organised Paraguay would also beat their team four days later in Asuncion.

Lionel Messi was a forlorn figure, his head bowed most of the time, as he failed to inspire a telling move and blasted a shot, and later a free-kick, over the bar. Maradona had said in the build-up that Messi looked better than ever before in training and pointed to five goals in a 45-minute game – but it was against a local youth team.

Brazil's back four, with Gilberto Silva and Felipe Melo in front of them, are a formidable wall that one would never dare compare with a team of 18-year-olds, and waiting for Messi were three or four defenders lined up in phases.

That should be enough to hush the debate that raged in Argentina over why Messi can't reproduce his Barcelona form with the national team. He was accused of lacking character, of not using his head. As if he had planned a retort, he went back to La Liga and headed a goal for Barcelona in their next league game.

Amid all the criticism heaped on Maradona since the 6-1 debacle against Bolivia in La Paz, he had been unlucky. The team's sensible, unrushed performance in their next match at altitude in Ecuador deserved a victory, but Carlos Tevez missed a penalty, a Messi chance went the wrong side of a post and the team lost their legs in the final quarter of an hour, conceding twice for a 2-0 defeat.

A 3-2 friendly win in Russia in August was all the action Argentina saw between the Ecuador match and meeting Brazil, who in contrast played five games on their way to winning the Confederations Cup in South Africa.

> **"Many fans wanted to see Maradona resign or be sacked but the media knew he would never quit or be booted out by Grondona"**

Surprising decision

Injuries to Martin Demichelis and Jonas Gutierrez, two players Maradona pens onto the team sheet without a second thought, played a part in his surprising decision to bloat his squad with locally-based players, including uncapped 36-year-old defender Rolando Schiavi and 35-year-old striker Martin Palermo, who had won all of his seven previous caps in 1999.

As it happened Schiavi (becoming Argentina's oldest-ever debutant) and Palermo combined to almost pull a stoppage-time equaliser out of the fire – the team's only real chance against Paraguay, who had taken a first-half lead with a fine goal by Nelson Haedo Valdez.

Many fans wanted to see Maradona resign or be sacked but the media knew that he would never quit or be booted out by Grondona, who would not want two coaching departures in one World Cup cycle after Alfio Basile's exit a year ago

Grondona had wanted a meeting with Maradona the week after the Paraguay defeat to suggest he take more advice from his entourage, who include the AFA technical director, Carlos Bilardo. But Maradona went off to Europe for a break instead.

Silently pacing the touchline, Maradona, watched aghast at what was happening – or wasn't in Argentina's case – as his team handed Brazil then Paraguay their tickets to South Africa while they dropped into the play-off berth. They will be dependent on other results to emerge from it even if they win their last two qualifiers against Peru and Uruguay.

This, on paper, should happen, given that Ecuador visit Chile in their last match when Bielsa's side, quite apart from their commitment to attack and winning, may still need at least a point to secure their qualification.

But even a win against Peru leaves Argentina with the daunting task of crossing the Rio de la Plata to face old foes Uruguay in a match both may need to win to qualify.

Five teams are vying for two places, assuming Chile claim the third automatic qualifying berth behind Brazil and Paraguay. Ecuador have 23 points, Argentina 22, Uruguay and Venezuela 21 and Colombia 20, with one taking the fourth automatic place and the next facing a two-leg play-off with the CONCACAF's fourth-placed team, which at present is Costa Rica.

Argentina and Uruguay have both been there before, when Oceania winners Australia were their opponents. Maradona led Argentina to a tight win in 1993, while Uruguay won in 2001 and Australia in 2005. History, it seems, may yet repeat itself. ●

How did that happen?...Argentina's players can't take it in after going down 3-1 to Brazil in Rosario

State takes control

The government has effectively nationalised the domestic game with a controversial TV deal

Playing for free?...Boca Juniors (in blue) take on Argentinos Juniors

> **The deal will cost the government £94million a year over 10 years but it is beset with problems**

ARGENTINA

ERIC WEIL in Buenos Aires

AS THE NATIONAL team struggled to reach South Africa, an historic domestic TV deal was being struck by the Argentinian FA and the government in which all top-flight matches would be screened free of charge on the state-funded station Channel 7.

The agreement was signed with much pomp between state president Cristina Kirchner and FA chief Julio Grondona at the FA's training camp near Buenos Aires, in what looked like a political rally, with all government ministers present and supporters bussed in for the occasion.

Under the terms of the deal, the government will pay 600million pesos (£94m) a year, over 10 years. However, the deal was beset with problems, not least because the existing TV rights holders, TyC, threatened legal action when the government broke its original deal after the company refused to pay more than the £44m a year it had agreed to screen games until 2014.

There were other problems. Channel 7's broadcasts can only be seen for free in the province of Buenos Aires, while elsewhere the channel's installations are old and it can only be viewed via cable-TV packages. Even Kirchner cannot watch for free in her home province of Santa Cruz.

The government claims it is not putting a cent into soccer and it will earn money on the deal through advertising and selling on rights, but TyC boss Marcelo Bombau claimed it was only earning half of what the government is paying out to the FA and clubs.

The deal could also cost the government in other ways. Channel 7 has had to contract out its coverage as it does not have the technical expertise, adding to the cost of the operation.

Opposition politicians criticised the deal in a country in which so many of the population are poor and threatened to cancel it if they won the next general election. They also claimed the deal was an attack on Argentina's best-selling paper, *Clarion*, a strong critic of the government and which is a partner of TyC.

Nevertheless, this state intervention in soccer could prove beneficial if it allows the government to monitor how clubs spend the money. Not that the clubs have seen any yet. The first instalment was set to be used to pay outstanding taxes and salaries while the second was due be retained by the FA. Meanwhile, clubs are squabbling about how to divide the cake. Most were unhappy at a system under which 22 per cent of funds will be shared by Boca Juniors and River Plate.

The start of the 2009-10 opening championship was delayed due to the ongoing negotiations, but that did not stop the top division's 20 clubs – the majority of whom are supposedly bankrupt – from continuing to sign new players. A total of 145 were signed during the close season, while 183 were either sold or dismissed.

Huracan played the best football during last season's closing championship and should have won the title. But as soon as the campaign finished, a host of agents and investors swarmed around the club and, in no time, 12 players have been moved on, including defenders Carlos Araujo (AEK Athens) and Carlos Arano (Aris Salonika), midfielders Gaston Beraldi (released), Cesar Gonzalez (Mexico's San Luis) and Javier Pastore (Palermo), and strikers Matias Defederico (Corinthians) and Federico Nieto (Colon). Huracan earned little from the departures as they owned only small parts of the players' contracts.

Injury-prone veterans

River Plate sold their best player, Colombia striker Radamel Falcao, to Porto, though they say they could not afford a replacement. Instead, they are relying on former international injury-prone veterans Ariel Ortega (35), Marcelo Gallardo (33) and Matias Almeyda (35), who had retired two years ago.

Boca Juniors sold leading striker Rodrigo Palacio to Genoa and did not renew the contracts of good players such as striker Luciano Figueroa and midfielder Fabian Vargas, while also selling promising defender Juan Forlin to Espanyol. They did make some good signings in midfielders Federico Insua and Ariel Rosada, and Chile defender Gary Medel, but the team, with many veterans, like top scorer Martin Palermo, is slowing down.

Independiente continue to sell in order to pay for their new stadium. The latest to go was midfielder Daniel Montenegro to Mexico's Club America. Coach Americo Gallego began the season with 30 players, of whom 20 were youngsters with little or no first division experience. Another poor season lies ahead.

San Lorenzo, heavily in debt, lost several leading figures, including Gonzalo Bergessio, the best striker left in Argentina, to Saint-Etienne. They were unable to sign a replacement because the transfer window closed 10 days earlier in Argentina than in Europe. ●

Daylight Ribery

The Frenchman is seething at being forced to stay at Bayern Munich and his relationship with coach Louis Van Gaal is already strained

> **"Bayern never wanted to sell him and when general manager Uli Hoeness and chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge play hardball, they play for keeps"**

GERMANY

NICK BIDWELL in Munich

FORGET THE mustard deposited in the shoes of team-mates, the water fights and the madcap episode in Dubai when he drove the team bus into a bollard. Bayern Munich's attacking maestro Franck Ribery no longer seems in the mood for pranks; his usual happy-go-lucky demeanour considerably darkened by the club's steadfast refusal to allow him to leave for Real Madrid in the close season. It's a severe shock to the system for any headliner to be told his desires are of no account.

Although Ribery is one of the world's top performers, can boast two of the game's most influential agents in Alain Migliaccio and Jean-Pierre Bernes, and had Real and their limitless line of credit on his trail, he and his entourage were never likely to prevail in this particular battle. Not with two years left on his contract and Bayern unwilling to countenance the departure of their most valuable asset.

Bayern just had no reason to do business. Unburdened by debt and having qualified directly for the Champions League, their only thought was to bounce straight back after a highly disappointing 2008-09 season and the last person they wanted to jettison was their totemic creative leader. Bayern minus their French star is nuclear threat downgraded to knuckledusters. He is irreplaceable.

During a summer crammed with reports of big-money offers for Ribery – £43million from Chelsea, £60m from Manchester United, then Real's £70m – a widely held assumption was that Bayern were stoking a bidding war, hoping to spectacularly cash in towards the end of the transfer window. Not the case. The Bavarians never wanted to sell, and when general manager Uli Hoeness and chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge play hardball, they play for keeps.

Former Bayern stars Michael Ballack and Owen Hargreaves bear witness to how stubborn the club can be. Both midfielders thought they could engineer a move away. Both discovered there was no visible means of escape and were forced to wait a year or more before eventually going.

This is not the first time Ribery has been ordered by a club board to unpack his bags. Back in the summer of 2006 he made it clear he wanted to quit Marseille for Lyon, only to be unceremoniously told by OM president Robert Louis-Dreyfus that he was going nowhere. Over the course of the following season – his last in Provence before a £25m move to Bayern – a palpably unhappy Ribery often went through the motions...and the fear in Munich is that history may repeat itself in the coming months.

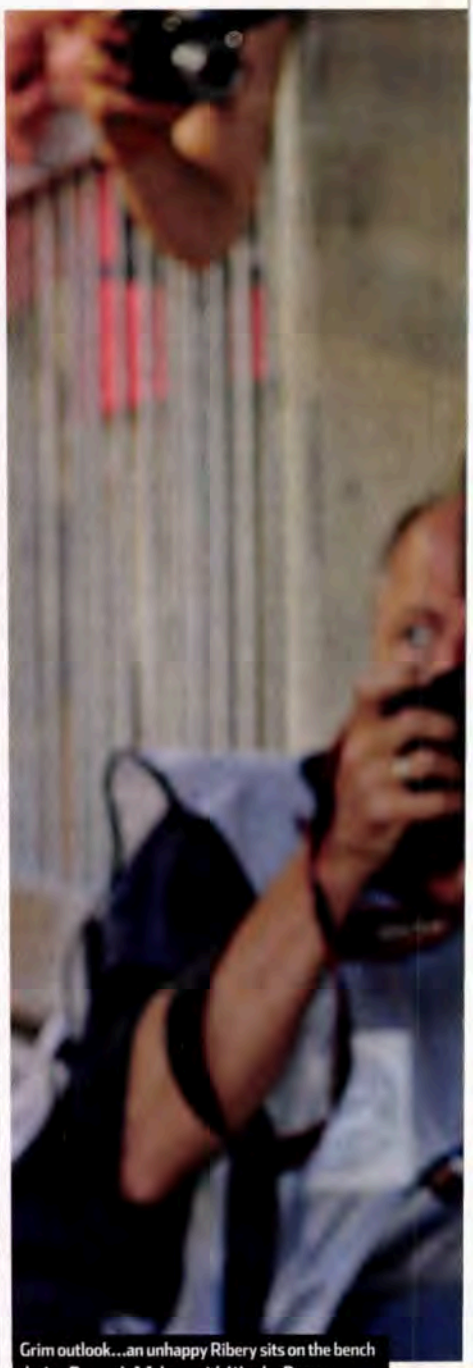
End of the affair

Already the signs point to the end of the affair. Ribery has voiced dissent at Bayern coach Louis Van Gaal's decision to use him centrally rather than on his preferred left wing, and in an interview with *L'Equipe* he did not hide his antipathy for his new boss.

"It's the first time in my career that my relationship with a coach is not positive. It doesn't feel right," said Ribery. "In training no one is laughing. Everything is too serious.

"I don't think this club needs a hard line. You must have a balance between fun and seriousness. And the fun is missing in my daily life with my team-mates."

Hard to see where "Kaiser Franck" and Van Gaal go from here. Free spirits and barked orders tend not to mix. While Rummenigge scoffs at the suggestion that Bayern's recent £22m purchase of Real Madrid's Dutch winger Arjen Robben forms part of an agreement to send Ribery in the opposite direction in 2010, such a



Grim outlook...an unhappy Ribery sits on the bench during Bayern's 1-1 draw with Werder Bremen

deferred exit does look probable. Next summer, after three seasons at Bayern, he will be able to buy himself out of his contract with a payment of £3.6m (a year's salary) and if he does not turn up at the Bernabeu, the end of the world may be nigh.

After failing to win one of their first three Bundesliga games this season, it was fourth time lucky for Bayern, comprehensively outgunning reigning champions Wolfsburg 3-0 at the Allianz Arena. Dynamic and purposeful from back to front, they looked on a mission to ram talk of a crisis down critics' throats.

But when the post-match laurels were doled out, the only recipient of praise was Robben, who exploded off the bench in the second half to score twice, both goals made by Ribery.

Robben, 25, has a point to prove in southern Germany. He hoped to feature in Galacticos II and still believes he was worthy of a place in the Real line-up this term. However, the Madrid decision makers thought otherwise and now he has to make the best of it. But it's not as if he has been packed off to the amateur ranks. Bayern provide an important European stage and his world-class pace and dribbling ability should help his new team narrow the gap which exists between them and the creme de la creme in England and Spain.

If he stays fit – admittedly a hard-to-fulfill proviso for much of his career to date – Bayern are on a winner. ●

Domenech digs in

Les Bleus' coach is clinging on in the face of huge opposition

FRANCE

HOWARD JOHNSON in Paris

EVERYBODY HATES Raymond. Or so it would appear yet again after the national team's insipid performances to date in the quest for automatic World Cup qualification. Everybody, that is, except for French federation president Jean-Pierre Escalettes, who is seemingly the only person in the country who still has confidence in national team coach Raymond Domenech.

Despite the fact that on paper *Les Bleus* have one of the strongest squads in world football, the country's qualifying campaign has been a continuing saga of dodgy selections, uninspiring performances, thinly disguised discontent in the ranks and endless underachievement.

Even before their latest qualifier against Serbia, skipper Thierry Henry was quoted as having complained to Domenech about his tactics and systems, saying the players were confused, though Henry later denied this.

Under such circumstances, the 1-1 draw in front of a hostile Belgrade crowd could quite reasonably be seen as something of a triumph for Domenech. After all, Serbia is one of the most difficult places to visit and France pulled themselves up by their bootstraps after going a goal down to an early penalty following an incident that resulted in keeper Hugo Lloris being sent off in the ninth minute.

Given France's inability to inspire their public, many believed that defeat was absolutely inevitable. But an Henry strike in the 31st minute gave the 10-man team parity in the match and they went on to tough it out for a well-deserved draw that leaves them unlikely to qualify as outright group winners, but with every chance of making it through to the play-off stage as one of eight best runners-up from the nine European qualifying groups.

Regardless of whether France finally make it to South Africa, huge doubts will still be cast over Domenech's ability to motivate a group of undoubtedly talented individuals. With players such as Franck Ribery, Nicolas Anelka, Yoann Gourcuff, Patrice Evra and Karim Benzema at his disposal, you'd think he would have been able to collect qualifying points without even thinking about it. But with France languishing on 15 points after eight games it looks most likely that the team will be forced to book their finals place the hard way. Given their talent this is a pretty poor show.

Bordeaux president Jean-Louis Triaud ratcheted up the pressure on Domenech when he spoke on French radio the day before the Serbia game. Triaud said that he wouldn't have anything against the idea of his coach, the highly-rated Laurent Blanc, looking after the national team for "an interim period" while still performing his duties at Bordeaux.

It was a statement that didn't best please the former France defender, who said: "Leave Domenech in peace for a bit and don't bring me into all this." It's unlikely, though, that anyone in the country actually has the intention of getting off the current coach's back any time soon.

Minor miracle

It's still not impossible for France to qualify directly as outright winners of Group 7, but it would take a minor miracle for that to happen. First of all Domenech's side would need to win their two remaining games, against the Faroe Islands on October 10 and then against Austria four days later. This is eminently doable and would give France a final total of 21 points.

Listen to him...Domenech (left) and Henry feel the tension against Serbia

> **"Leave Domenech in peace for a bit an don't bring me into all this"**
>
> *Bordeaux's Laurent Blanc is not best pleased to be talked up for the national team coach's job*

But Serbia are already on 19 points and their remaining two games are at home to Romania and away to Lithuania, two countries they have already beaten. You'd have to be a real optimist to believe that France will avoid the play-offs, then, though at least Austria's draw against Romania means *Les Bleus* need only a win against the Faroes to guarantee a play-off place and a winner-takes-all scenario in November.

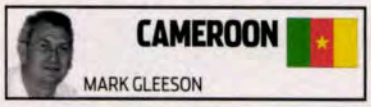
But regardless of all this, France's qualifying campaign has been highly unconvincing by anybody's standards. And Domenech's complete refusal to acknowledge his side's failings or the generally moribund nature of France's performances in front of the French public has only exacerbated feelings of frustration among supporters.

Domenech may, of course, end up having the last laugh. It wouldn't be the first time that a team supposedly in crisis made a decent fist of a finals tournament. Remember 1998?

But it certainly feels like a creditable showing in South Africa is an absolute must if the coach is to remain at the head of the France team. Time, as always, will tell. ●

Le Guen's revival

The new French coach has put the Indomitable Lions back on the road to World Cup qualification



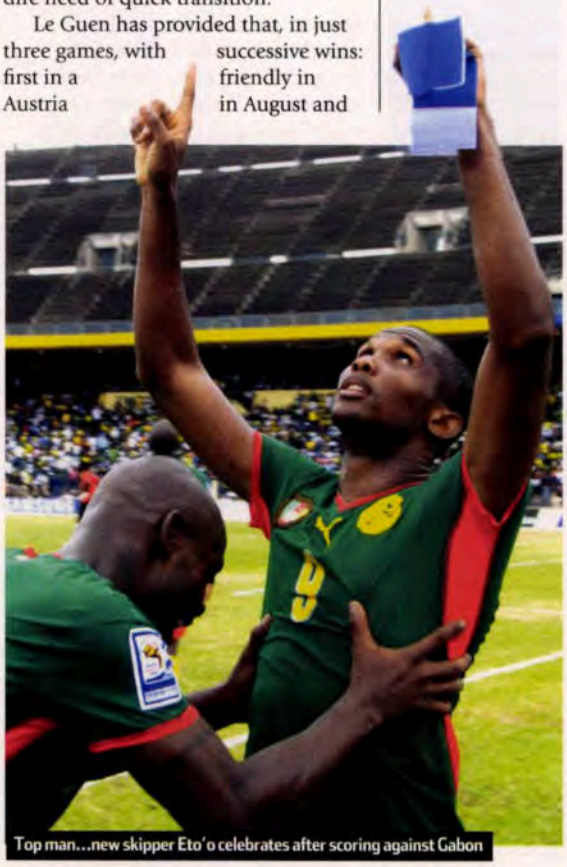
IT HAS TAKEN but a month for Paul Le Guen to engineer a remarkable turn around in fortunes for Cameroon, placing one of Africa's most consistent performers back on track for World Cup qualification.

After failure at Rangers and the two seasons of contrasting fortunes at Paris Saint-Germain, the star of the taciturn French coach looked to be fading – his three successive Ligue 1 titles with Lyon dimming in the distance.

But Cameroon offered the chance for a change, albeit starting in a precarious position at the bottom of their World Cup qualifying group and looking ever more like a side in dire need of quick transition.

Le Guen has provided that, in just three games, with successive wins: first in a friendly in Austria in August and then back-to-back qualifiers with group leaders Gabon. It sees the Indomitable Lions roaring again.

> "Le Guen has made preparations more professional and started to brush away the team's cobwebs"


Top man...new skipper Eto'o celebrates after scoring against Gabon

What Le Guen has done is relatively simple, adding professionalism to the preparations and starting the process of brushing away the team's cobwebs. For Cameroon it has been a radical shift serving to energise the squad enough to produce vital wins that put them back on line for a place at the finals.

Le Guen has signed only a six-month contract but demanded he bring with him his long-standing assistant Yves Colleu and two medical staff and that Cameroon appoint their Portuguese match agent Alexandre Ribeiro as team co-ordinator.

He wants the arrangements to proceed smoothly and the players to be treated like professionals. It means top hotels and business-class travel, an anomaly in a country where one former national coach, Philippe Redon, used to joke about having to bring his own light bulbs out from France to illuminate his office in the bowels of the stadium.

Shoddy arrangements

Cameroon are at best a motley bunch, though full of infectious enthusiasm. Their last coach, Otto Pfister, had done and seen it all in African football and long dispensed with any requirements for the niceties of the modern game, so they bumbled along with shoddy arrangements and endless shrugs of the shoulders.

That approach also works, but only up to a point. With a squad drawn exclusively from European clubs, Cameroonian footballers previously lived a Jekyll and Hyde existence with swift efficiency at club level and then bumbling jocularity when they went home for international duty.

Le Guen is running the team like a top club, with imported medical equipment and tight curfews. His philosophy is that if you want to get professional performances from your players, then you must treat them

Turnaround...Le Guen

accordingly. This goes for the money aspect too, so often the elephant in the room in the past. That is now all taken care of, leaving the players to concentrate on the task at hand.

This they did from the start. In Austria, Le Guen made his first symbolic move, dropping Rigobert Song to the bench and installing Samuel Eto'o as captain.

Song is an iconic figure, the first player from a sub-Saharan country to pass the milestone of 100 caps and a living legend with his dreadlocks and never-say-die attitude. But he is slowing and, as was emphasised in last year's African Nations Cup Final, a growing liability. Superstar Eto'o stands out as the obvious new leader and Le Guen has turned to him to rally the cause.

Internazionale's new signing responded with goals in both matches against Gabon – first on the Saturday away in Libreville, where the match was played against the backdrop of rioting in response to the perceived rigging of presidential election results, and then again five days later in Yaounde.

Cameroon won 2-0 away and 2-1 at home to leapfrog from last to top their group. They have a one-point advantage over Gabon and four points from their two remaining games, against Togo at home and Morocco away, could clinch a finals place. ●

Boringly brilliant

The national team's performances have been so impressive that the country is beginning to take Vicente Del Bosque's side for granted

IF NO NEWS is good news then it's tempting to conclude that good news is no news at all. Not when it's this familiar, anyway, because when it's this familiar, the extraordinary becomes ordinary.

Spain have already qualified for next summer's World Cup finals, securing their place in South Africa with an eighth successive victory. A 3-0 win against Estonia in Merida followed a 5-0 hammering of Belgium in La Coruna and offered yet another demonstration of the *seleccion's* talents. But Spain have a problem: they are just too good. They've become boringly brilliant.

During the fortnight of the last international break, the national team only made the front cover of the country's best-selling newspaper, *Marca*, twice – three times if you include the news that coach Vicente Del Bosque was set to be offered a new contract by the Spanish Football Federation. They made the same number of appearances on the cover of the other national sports daily, *AS*.

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez promising to turn the Santiago Bernabeu into a footballing version of the Guggenheim Museum; Perez promising to build a Real Madrid theme park; Cristiano Ronaldo and Leo Messi maybe missing out on South Africa; Atletico Madrid's early-season crisis; Jorge Valdano hinting that Franck Ribery might turn up at Madrid one day; Diego Maradona in meltdown; Ruben De la Red saying he doesn't know when he will be able to play again; Raul being likened to an 18-year-old...all of these were deemed more important than news of the European champions.

Inside, the papers were scrabbling around for something to fill their pages. One "story" showed how Madrid were on course to finish the season with a record tally of goals by racking up 110 – something that, they helpfully pointed out, "Barcelona didn't manage". For those who wondered how they worked that out just one game into the season, they had factored in Madrid's pre-season results too – a method that would see Villarreal, 27-0 winners in one particular summer preparation game, on course for 400 goals or so!

Spain were not completely ignored, of course. And those covers that were dedicated to Del Bosque's side expressed their delight, with *Marca* describing them as a "machine" and *AS* simply dubbing them "the best" after the Belgium game.

"Now go and win the World Cup," *Marca* ordered once qualification was in the bag with victory over Estonia. "Let's go get South Africa's gold," implored *AS*. But it certainly was striking that in a week of club inactivity, the country's cruise to the finals didn't lead the agenda.

In a curious sort of way, it was also the biggest compliment you could pay the national side, the greatest of eulogies you could hand to Del Bosque and his players. Maybe 'twas always thus. There was, after all, none of the scandal that the media loves, no meat, no bones to pick over. No confrontations or controversy, no shock results. Just very, very good ones. Again. There was just an excellent football team.

High fives...Spain's all-conquering players celebrate a nap hand against Belgium in La Coruna

Fun and games

One columnist admitted that he "missed" the fun and games of the Luis Aragones era and another complained that, while Aragones turned every squad get-together into a circus, with Del Bosque there was calm normality, without compromising on the style and results that – by the end – Aragones' team achieved.

In fact, what was most "normal" of all was the results. Tumbleweed blew past where once there were furious dialectical battles driven by poor results. On one hour-long debate show, a pundit started to whinge about how Cesc Fabregas should play more for the national team.

So he was asked if he'd drop Xabi Alonso to put him in. No, he said. Andres Iniesta? No. Xavi? No. Marcos

Senna? No. David Silva? "Maybe we're just debating for the hell of it," he conceded. "Everything's going so well." Spain had just inflicted Belgium's worst defeat in 25 years.

Besides, three days later Fabregas did play. And he scored and played wonderfully. But he was not alone. Del Bosque made changes and yet the result stayed the same. Santi Cazorla and Juan Mata got their chances – and both scored. It was typical of how things are going.

What alterations have been carried out have been done so smoothly as to alter nothing and that has bought the coach credit. Gerard Pique came into the squad and performed as if he'd been there for years, even adding two goals; Osasuna full-back Nacho Monreal was called up and no one complained; barely a word was said when Athletic Bilbao's Fernando Llorente (as opposed to Joseba Llorente of Villarreal) became part of the squad.

And as for the Raul debate, it's been forgotten by all but the most myopic of Raulistas.

Everything is so, well, normal. Great results and performances are just what happens and people have to some extent stopped noticing. It is a measure of just how successful Spain have become, how consistently excellent their performances have been, that so little fuss was made about them, how few arguments there were. And that is the thing, of course. Take a step back and what makes Spain extraordinary is the sheer relentlessness of their success.

"The covers dedicated to the side expressed their delight, with *Marca* describing them as a "machine" and *AS* simply dubbing them "the best"

Joint world record

When they were beaten by USA in the Confederations Cup semi-final it was their first defeat in 36 games – a joint world record. They had won Euro 2008 in incontestable style under Aragones, and Del Bosque had picked up where his predecessor had left off. Under him, Spain have won 17 of 18 matches and their record in qualifying stands eight out of eight, with 21 scored and just two conceded. Only Wayne Rooney has scored more than David Villa in group games.

However, one nagging doubt remains: have Spain beaten any really great sides since the European Championship? With the exception of England – beaten 2-0 in a friendly in Seville – it is tempting to say no. But, off the back of their success at Euro 2008, results do make a powerful case to present them as favourites in South Africa. And it's not just about the results. Everything has all been done in style, too, with a confidence, a swagger and a conviction – and one that hints at the fact that this side is even better than the one that beat Germany in Vienna.

As one columnist put it, Spain's destruction of Belgium was a retort, a message "for all of those who think it's not possible to play like the angels...for those who think of football as a defensive pursuit...for the Taliban of the tactics board...for the coaches who lock away their creative players...for those who don't like beautiful football". He would say that, of course, but he had a point.

Even defeated Belgium goalkeeper Jean-Francois Gillet enjoyed it.

"Getting beaten by Spain enriches you, it allows you to see things that you never normally see on the pitch," he said. "It must be great fun to play for them. They have great control of the ball, they move it extraordinarily fast, and everyone runs. It's very hard to make them struggle at all because they have the ball the whole time.

"With the football they play, they're capable of anything." ●

Miracle workers

A divided country has been brought together by an incredible World Cup qualifying campaign

BOSNIA

PETERJON CRESSWELL in Sarajevo

ARGENTINA'S DEMISE? England's revival? North Korea's qualification? Surely the most remarkable story from the qualifying phase of the 2010 World Cup is the miracle of Bosnia. A win against Estonia in Tallinn will assure Miroslav Blazevic's side of a play-off place as Group 5 runners-up and make their last game – at home to European champions Spain – a warm-up for the final two-leg hurdle.

A FIFA member since only 1996, the fledging nation of Bosnia & Herzegovina, which was devastated by a gruesome civil war, remains fractured by ethnic divides, but football has brought the nation together; a collective phenomenon that is personified by the passionate atmosphere around the narrow pitch at the Bilino Polje in provincial Zenica.

Unlike the open bowl of the national Kosevo Stadium in Sarajevo, which is surrounded by cemeteries, Zenica is fierce and compact. It was here, in September, that Bosnia came from behind to draw 1-1 with their nearest rivals Turkey, thanks to a splendid free-kick from Hoffenheim's Sejad Salihovic. The crowd roared the players on until the very last minute, and at the final whistle the relief was palpable as everyone's thoughts immediately turned to Tallinn.

Going through...Bosnia's Senijad Ibricic gets the better of Semih Senturk (left) and Hakan Balta of Turkey

Footballing folklore

Coach Blazevic, a seemingly ageless man who is wily, superstitious and diplomatic – and who wore a French policeman's kepi while leading Croatia to third place at the 1998 World Cup – is writing himself another chapter in footballing folklore.

Two years ago he was hired by a debt-ridden Bosnian FA – who were in disarray over the controversial dismissal of coach Mehmed Kodro – to lead an unlikely World Cup campaign in a qualifying group featuring Spain, Turkey and Belgium.

As always, the stars favoured "Ciro". Although they lost in Spain, and then a little later away to Turkey, Blazevic's side rallied his side as its key players began to shine in Germany's Bundesliga. As the season unfolded, Vedad Ibisevic began scoring a hatful of goals for then-Bundesliga leaders Hoffenheim, whose midfield featured Salihovic of the rocket free-kick.

As that particular miracle waned with Ibisevic's injury before the winter break, another striker by the name of Edin Dzeko started to make headlines with Felix Magath's Wolfsburg as he and South American partner Grafite began to notch more goals between them than Bayern Munich back in Gerd Muller's day.

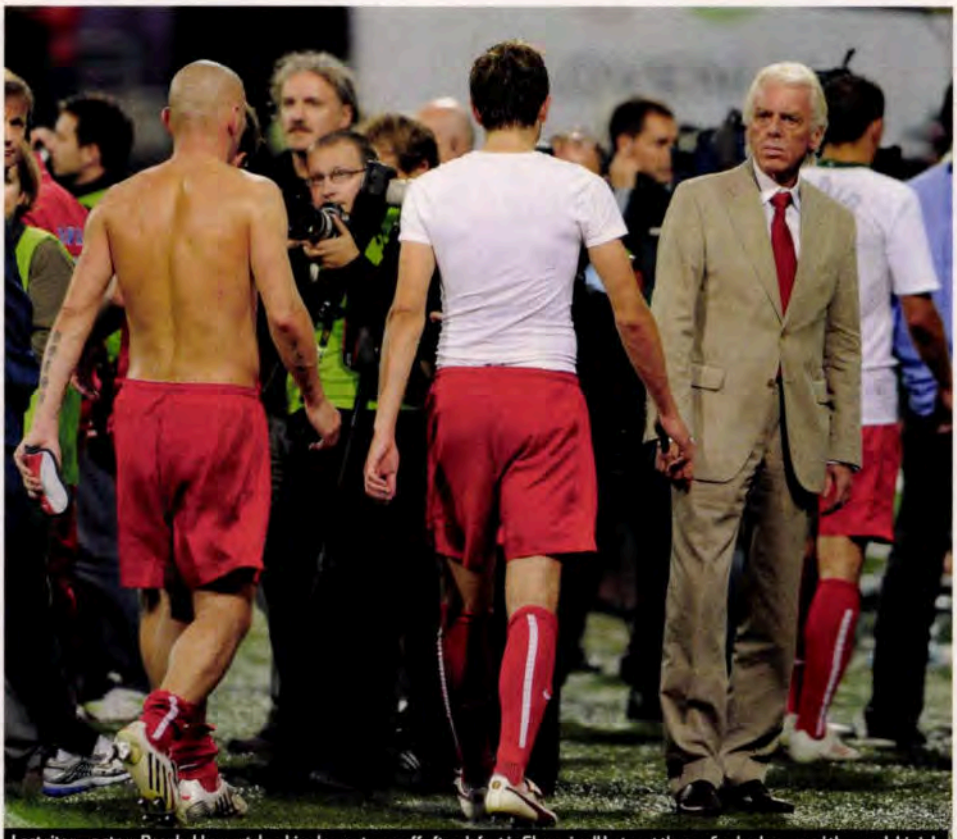
As at Hoffenheim, the Wolfsburg midfield starred a Bosnian, and Zvjezdan Misimovic clocked up the season's highest number of assists as he helped Magath's side to an unlikely league title. However, it was Sarajevo-born Dzeko – 23 years old and nearly 6ft 4in tall – who broke onto the world stage one night in Genk as Bosnia went to Cristal Arena to take on Belgium in the first of two matches between the countries last Easter.

> **"Blazevic is writing himself another chapter in footballing folklore"**

Out of the blue, Dzeko's seventh-minute strike took the wind out of the hosts' sails. Tails up, and roared on by Bosnians who had come together from across Europe, it began to rain goals.

Flares from the Bosnian fans stopped the game – something that required Blazevic to personally go around the touchline and urge restraint – but when the smoke cleared Bosnia had won 4-2 and Group 5 had been turned on its head.

After another tense night in Zenica for the return – and two more goals from Dzeko – Bosnia won 2-1 to set themselves up for the autumn run-in and put Blazevic within touching distance of South Africa. ●



Last rites...a stern Beenhakker watches his players troop off after defeat in Slovenia all but cost them a finals place – and the coach his job

Hero to zero

The departure of national coach Leo Beenhakker was inevitable after defeat in Slovenia all but ended Poland's World Cup qualification hopes

POLAND

DARIUSZ KUROWSKI in Warsaw

LEO BEENHAKKER paid the price for Poland's failure to qualify for the World Cup. The 67-year-old Dutch coach was sacked following the 3-0 defeat by Slovenia in Maribor. With two games remaining – away to Czech Republic and at home to group leaders Slovakia – the national side have only a mathematical chance of finishing in the runners-up spot.

Immediately after the final whistle in Maribor, FA chairman Grzegorz Lato declared on Polish television station TVN: "It was Beenhakker's last game as Poland coach. This decision is final."

Beenhakker was furious when informed of Lato's declaration by a reporter at the post-match press conference, saying: "That says much more about the level of Mr Lato and the board of the FA than about me."

Beenhakker did not return to Poland with the team and instead went directly to Holland.

The next day Lato apologised for his "emotional behaviour" in the aftermath of the painful defeat and admitted that he should have informed the coach about the dismissal before going public. He invited Beenhakker to a meeting to discuss the details of his departure, but the Dutchman said: "I do not want to see Mr Lato ever again!"

Beenhakker was appointed in July 2006 after the disappointing World Cup first-round exit in Germany and two years ago he became a national hero when he led the team to their first-ever appearance at the European Championships.

He described Poland as "a sleeping giant with as many young talents as in the greatest footballing countries". But his own star began to fade after Euro 2008, where his side collected just one draw in three games and finished bottom of their group.

Things got worse when Lato, a national legend and top scorer at the 1974 World Cup, was elected FA chairman in October last year. He never believed Beenhakker to be the best choice as national coach and FA officials openly described the Dutchman as "arrogant".

> **I do not want to see Mr Lato ever again**
>
> *Furious Beenhakker refuses to accept the Polish FA president's apology for going public prematurely over his sacking*

Marriage of convenience

When Beenhakker became an adviser to his beloved Feyenoord earlier this year, Lato was unhappy at the arrangement and their relationship became a marriage of convenience. After the defeat by Slovenia, described by Beenhakker as Poland's worst game during his period in charge, his departure was inevitable.

Under-23 coach Stefan Majewski looks likely to act as caretaker for the remaining two qualifiers, but after that who knows?

Majewski has ambitions to stay for longer but there are other candidates: Franciszek Smuda (three-times a Polish league champion with Widzew Lodz and Wisla Krakow), Henryk Kasperczak (former coach of Ivory Coast, Tunisia, Morocco, Mali and Senegal), Pawel Janas (Beenhakker's predecessor) and Maciej Skorza (winner of two titles with Wisla in 2008 and 2009). Lato has said: "It is too early to talk about names, but the next coach definitely will be a Pole."

As co-hosts with Ukraine of Euro 2012, Poland will have an automatic place in the tournament and will not play any competitive games until June 2012, so the new coach will have two-and-a-half years to prepare a strong team. But, on the other hand, fans' expectations before the European Championship in their own country will be incredibly high. And taking into consideration the low level of Polish football at the moment, it will be difficult to find anybody who can fulfil those hopes.

And what of Beenhakker? He plans to remain at Feyenoord and will not consider a return to Poland.

His answer to the question, "what do you regret the most?", was short and direct: "Nothing." ●

On their way

Wins over Georgia and Bulgaria have as good as put the world champions on the plane to South Africa

ITALY

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

ITALIAN FOOTBALL received a badly needed fillip in early September when Marcello Lippi's world champions left some unimpressive recent performances behind them with a convincing 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Bulgaria. This win meant Italy could travel to Dublin in October for what might otherwise have been a very difficult qualifier with the comfortable cushion of a four-point lead over Giovanni Trapattoni's side.

Italy can even lose in Dublin and still win the group thanks to their final game being at home to Cyprus in Parma four days later. No one wants to say it but Italy's qualification is as good as in the bag. More importantly, the Italians now seem sure to miss the lottery of the play-offs that could have seen them come head-to-head with awkward customers such as France, Portugal, Russia or Turkey.

Little wonder that Lippi was a satisfied man in Turin as he reflected on a game that Italy wrapped up with first-half goals from Fabio Grosso and Vincenzo Iaquinta, saying: "I'm very happy for my players. People were trying to suggest they were no good but, in reality, this is a side that has a lot of quality, mental and physical. They scored two splendid goals in a very good first half when we might have had five and then, after that, we contained the game.

"You've got to remember that this is a time of year when we [Italian sides] are never at our best, the players from the other leagues start earlier than us and they are fitter than us. On top of that we made a number of changes tonight and they worked well."

Lippi and Italy had gone into the Bulgaria match under something of a cloud. Not only had the side been humbled in June, during the Confederations Cup in South Africa in which the *Azzurri* lost 1-0 to Egypt and 3-0 to Brazil, but they had also been distinctly unimpressive four days earlier in a 2-0 World Cup win against Georgia in Tbilisi.

Although that result had gone Italy's way, they had looked ineffective and rarely dangerous against a young, motivated but hardly irresistible Georgia. We had to wait until the 52nd minute for the first Italian shot on goal. Italy might be No4 in the FIFA world rankings, with Georgia at 112, but for the first hour of this game you would never have guessed.

In the end, fortune came to the rescue in the shape of the hapless Georgian captain Kakha Kaladze. The Milan defender had not played a competitive game for seven month – since losing the Milan derby in February – and his ring rustiness was to cost his country dear.

Seconds after Gigi Buffon had made a remarkable point-blank save from Vladimir Dvalishvili, Sampdoria midfielder Angelo Palombo tried a speculative long-range shot. His effort appeared to be on the way out but, in a futile attempt to be ultra safe, Kaladze, trying to head the shot away for a corner, managed to turn it into his own net.

This was a goal that would have looked embarrassing in a Sunday morning kick around, let alone in a World Cup qualifier – but worse was to follow. Incredibly, Kaladze staged an encore 11 minutes later, once more completely wrong-footing his goalkeeper, Giorgi Lomaia, when attempting to deal with a cross from Genoa left-back Domenico Criscito.

> **"People have suggested we are no good but this side has a lot of quality, both mental and physical"**
>
> *Marcello Lippi*

Italians have never been ones to go in for advanced dentistry when it comes to gift horses and so it was in Tbilisi, with Kaladze effectively winding up the business there and then. Trailing by two goals, and with their morale utterly deflated, Georgia faded from the game leaving Italy to freewheel home, even if the Italian handbrake seemed to be stuck in the "on" position.

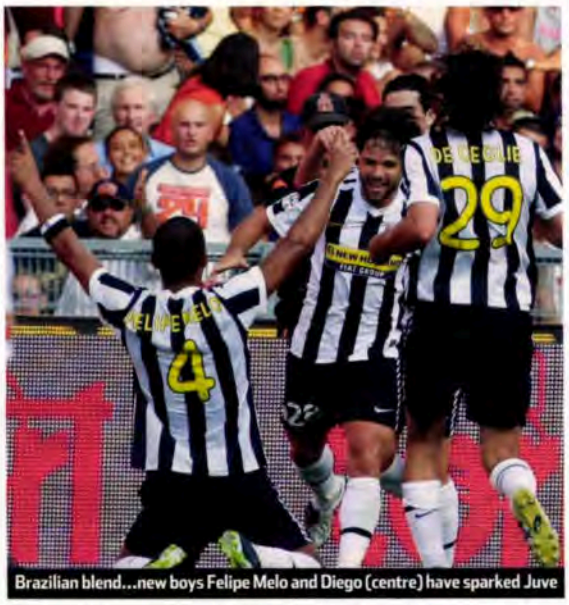
Impressive performance

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the Bulgaria result. Even if it is true that Bulgaria made it easier for Italy by adopting a much less negative approach than in their 0-0 draw in Sofia one year ago (after all, the Bulgarians realistically needed to win in order to maintain their slim chances of qualification), this was still an impressive Italian performance.

For much of the last year, Lippi has been criticised for sticking too loyally to his 2006 World Cup winners. Against Bulgaria, there were nine of them on the field. Not surprisingly, in his post-match observations, Lippi suggested that we will be seeing quite a lot more of his World Cup-winning squad, saying: "I will be continuing to use them, don't worry."

The win against Bulgaria may also have laid to rest the unending polemic about Antonio Cassano of Sampdoria. As Italy struggled and stuttered against Egypt, Brazil and Georgia, there were many asking if Lippi could really afford to ignore the gifted talents of Cassano. With qualification (almost) in the bag, the Cassano issue may finally fade.

In the meantime, however, there will be a lot of attention paid to another striker, Juve's Brazil-born Amauri, currently in the process of being "naturalised" Italian. Lippi has consistently said that he will consider



Brazilian blend...new boys Felipe Melo and Diego (centre) have sparked Juve

the 29-year-old just as soon as the process is completed. Many are convinced that this will happen this winter, with Amauri likely to be called into the national team.

While Lippi waits (or not) for Amauri, he can take comfort from the emergence this summer and autumn of at least four new boys who can be expected to figure in South Africa next year: Criscito, Juventus midfielder Claudio Marchisio, Udinese midfielder Gaetano D'Agostino and Villarreal striker Giuseppe Rossi.

Even at this stage, the dye is cast with Lippi almost certain to defend his world title with a side that relies heavily on the Germany 2006 squad, slightly modified by the inclusion of such as Criscito, Marchisio, Rossi et al. Based on their Confederations Cup showing, such an Italy will not be good enough. Based on their win against Bulgaria, they will again be serious tournament contenders. Which Italy will show up in South Africa? We suspect it will be the latter.

On the domestic front, the Serie A campaign began with Juventus looking the only serious challengers to Internazionale's bid for a fifth successive *scudetto*.

The sensational starts made by Juve's two big mid-summer buys, Brazil stars Diego and Felipe Melo – who were both on the scoresheet in an impressive 3-1 win away to Roma – already has fans in a state of some excitement. Both are potential match winners: the former as a creative playmaker, the latter as a rock-solid midfield ball winner.

Without Carlo Ancelotti, Paolo Maldini and Kaka, Milan – under new coach Leonardo – were always going to struggle, a point cruelly underlined by Inter in an emphatic 4-0 thrashing of their city rivals in the second game of the season.

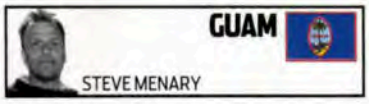
With Milan and Roma seemingly stuck in low gear, and with sides such as Fiorentina and Genoa just that tad short of top-of-the-table best, Ciro Ferrara's Juventus seem the only real obstacle in the path of Inter and their boss, Jose Mourinho. ●

A right old knees-up...Andrea Pirlo and Bulgaria's Radostin Kishishev collide during Italy's 2-0 win in Turin

Learning curve...Gaum (blue shirts) concede another goal to North Korea in a 9-2 defeat at the East Asian Championship

Moving on up

The tiny Pacific island team have surged to 186th in FIFA's world rankings



GUAM

STEVE MENARY

GUAM'S SHOCK run in the 2010 East Asian Championship ended with a humbling, but football on the isolated Pacific island has still enjoyed its best year.

Guam joined FIFA in 1996 and waited 13 years to beat a fellow member. That win came in the preliminary round of the 2010 East Asian Football Federation (EAFF) competition, in which they edged Mongolia 1-0 thanks to Christopher Mendiola's winner. They then pipped neighbours North Mariana Islands 2-1 with goals from Joshua Borja and Ian Mariano to set up a decider with Macau.

More than 1,400 fans saw Jason Cunliffe's last minute goal salvage a 2-2 draw for Guam at the Leo Palace Resort in Yona and send his team to the semi-final round in Taiwan.

In August, at Kaohsiung, Guam shocked World Cup finalists North Korea when Borja scored in the first minute before his side were thrashed 9-2. Two days later, Guam took a two-goal lead against the hosts, Borja on target twice, only to go down 4-2.

Guam's campaign ended with a 12-0 thumping by Hong Kong but with Guam Football Association (GFA) president Richard Lai elected on to the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) executive committee earlier this year, the game among the locals in one of FIFA's weakest members is making real progress.

More help needed

Guam have surged up FIFA's rankings to 186th place. But while funds from FIFA's Goal project have provided a headquarters and pitches, more help is needed.

Jean Cepeda, a coach at Isla Sports Association, which runs junior football and basketball sides, says: "Although GFA has an outstanding training facility, to allow clubs to practice there will destroy the fields for matches. Youth participation is club based, [and] club leaders must use fields also used for other sports, such as American football, baseball or rugby.

"Another obstacle is a lack of coaches or volunteers willing to coach. Without coaches, clubs are limited to the number of players they can accept. [There is also] a lack of clubs and additional organisations willing to start up and administer a club. Many volunteers are satisfied to stay as a coach and not worry about the administrative responsibilities."

> **There is a lack of coaches or volunteers willing to coach so clubs are limited to the number of players they can accept**
>
> *Isla Sports Association coach, Jean Cepeda*

The sport is still the most popular on Guam with 600 adult players and 1,600 children registered with the GFA, which was formed in 1975 after the island staged the South Pacific Games. Activity lapsed in the 1980s, before US Navy teams began matches with local sides. The game gained impetus and the GFA joined the AFC as an associate in 1992-93.

Today, the GFA has a dozen full members – including Sidekicks Soccer Club, who were founded in 1985 and are the oldest still in existence – and run a two-tier league.

The island has two football seasons: one running from early February to Easter, the second from September to the beginning of Thanksgiving. Quality FC won the league-and-cup double in the first season and were joined in the top flight by Crushers, who won the second division.

No players from Guam play professionally abroad at present, but midfielder Cunliffe turned out for Santa Clara University while studying in the US and national team-mate, Mark Chargualaf recently had trials with professional teams in Japan.

The final round of the EAFF championship will be in Japan. Guam may not be there, but the island's footballers can look to next year with more confidence than ever. ●

The jean genie

National coach Morten Olsen's casual approach has taken the Danes to the brink of World Cup qualification

THERE ARE three kinds of big-time football manager who shout and suffer on the touchlines: one wears training gear to prove he sweats blood for the job, while the second wears a fashionable suit and tie to show he's an intelligent and elegant man of the world.

And then there is Morten Olsen. He wore jeans on the day Denmark played Portugal in a high-pressure 1-1 draw that took the national team to the brink of qualification for next summer's World Cup finals.

Olsen is 60 years old now, a great player who became a very fine manager, and who is probably the longest-serving national team coach of any country with serious pretensions in international football. He is nearly 10 years into the job with Denmark and ready for his greatest triumph in leading an unconsidered team to the World Cup from the toughest of all the European qualifying groups.

Victories away to group favourites Portugal and Sweden were remarkable achievements for a Danish side that had been dubbed *Landshold X* because of their anonymous players and utilitarian style.

The unknown warriors have done just fine, though – and maybe having a laid-back leader wearing jeans suits their mood perfectly as they quietly go about subduing the flashy, catwalk talents of Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Many critics in Denmark reckoned this was their worst national team for 30 years when the qualifying campaign started with a low-key 0-0 draw away to Hungary 12 months ago.

For a country that enjoyed the scintillating "Danish Dynamite" side of the 1980s, then triumph in the 1992 European Championship, followed by progress to the 1998 World Cup quarter-finals, and which had feasted on generations of superstar players from Olsen himself and Allan Simonsen, through the Laudrup brothers, Michael and Brian, to goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, it was easy to see why the current team was scorned.

Yet nobody should mistake Olsen as a man who lacks passion or purpose. He has patiently created a new team that keeps the ball with technical skill and makes the very most of its components.

The best-known player is striker Jon Dahl Tomasson, who has scored 51 goals in 105 internationals, a better record than any English footballer. He is now 33 and in a second spell at Feyenoord towards the close of a productive career that peaked at Milan.

Alongside him is Nicklas Bendtner, who scored in both the 1-1 draws against Portugal and Albania, and whose physical presence has given the side a more robust feel. Yet Bendtner is never a certain starter with his club Arsenal.

Olsen wants more youngsters like Bendtner to force their way into the team should the Danes complete qualification for the World Cup finals. One who already has is 20-year-old centre-back Simon Kjaer, who plays his club football for Palermo in Serie A. If and when Liverpool's Daniel Agger recovers fitness, this pair will form a high-class duo.

Otherwise, the side is workmanlike, with Christian Poulsen of Juventus symbolic as a hard-running tackler in the centre of midfield. His namesake Jakob Poulsen, from Aarhus, has also impressed in recent matches.

Nobody predicted these anonymous Danes would do well, yet they go into the final two matches, at home to Sweden and Hungary, in charge of the group. A draw against their near neighbours, the Swedes, would guarantee qualification even before the final game.

But that will be easier said than done, given Sweden won in the Parken stadium in Copenhagen the last time they visited in a Euro 2008 qualifier marred by a Danish fan running on to the pitch to try to assault the referee who had given a last-minute penalty to the visitors.

It will be a night of tension in the stands and on the touchlines, even if Olsen is wearing his jeans again. ●

Smart casual ... Olsen has created a technically skilful Denmark side

Unlikely saviour

Brazil-born American billionaire Guma Aguiar has big plans for Beitar Jerusalem

IN A CITY LIKE Jerusalem, that sits at the spiritual intersection between the big three monotheistic religions, the line between saviour and false prophet has always been a controversial topic. But for the supporters of Beitar Jerusalem, Israel's most popular club, it has been more of an issue of confusion, having declared the arrival of the Messiah twice in three years.

First it was the turn of Arcadi Gaydamak, the controversial Russia-born tycoon, who four years ago bought the team, bought success and bought the affections of the fans. Now, with that dream turning sour, Israeli football facing something of a financial crisis, Beitar on the verge of bankruptcy and Gaydamak in self-imposed exile, an equally colourful character has emerged to save Beitar from oblivion.

No one had heard of Guma Aguiar two years ago, but since riding to the rescue this summer by guaranteeing Beitar's survival he has become something of a celebrity. Having been born to a Jewish mother in Brazil but raised a Christian in the US, he rediscovered Judaism late. But the young, brash 31-year-old billionaire, who made his money when his company, Leor Energy, discovered America's largest natural-gas field in Texas before retiring, has been making up for lost time. He has given a string of hyperbolic appearances on TV, declaring his undying love for Jerusalem, and undertaken huge acts of philanthropy.

One organisation, Nefesh B'Nefesh, which promotes the resettling of Jews from around the world in Israel, reported that Aguiar walked into their office and left a cheque for £3million before strolling out again. Politicians like president Shimon Peres are clamouring to be photographed next to him. So why invest in Israeli football next?

"I love Jerusalem, it's special. You're not in Kansas anymore, that's for sure," Aguiar explains. "I was approached. There are a lot of people here who feel strongly about their teams. It reminds me a lot of Brazil, going to the Maracana. A lot people here don't care about anything other than football. I can relate to that."

Those with longer memories, however, will have heard something similar before. When Gaydamak bought the club in 2005, he too was feted. "Arcadi is the Messiah!" sung the fans that thronged Beitar's Teddy Stadium. Gaydamak lapped up the publicity and used his popularity at a club renowned for its connection to the right-wing Likud Party – and who count former prime ministers Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert and current leader Binyamin Netanyahu as fans – to raise his political profile.

Eventually he set up his own political group, the Social Justice party, and with a gift for self-promotion planned to run for mayor of Jerusalem. But Gaydamak brought a lot of baggage with him: in particular an arrest warrant in France for alleged arms smuggling during Angola's brutal civil war. When he finally stood last November he polled just over three per cent.

Gaydamak, who felt that Beitar's fans owed him a shot at elected office, left for Russia soon after, leaving the club in a perilous financial state. Despite pouring £65m into the team, Beitar was on the verge of bankruptcy before Aguiar emerged in May.

Yet Gaydamak was just one of a host of rich, foreign businessmen who invested heavily in Israeli football only to be caught out by the credit crunch, Israel's acerbic sports press or both.

Daniel Jammer, a German tycoon, bought Maccabi Netanya and tried to sign David Beckham before installing Lothar Matthaus as coach. Russia-born Canadian billionaire Alex Shnaider bought Israel's most revered team Maccabi Tel Aviv.

"In part I think it was an extension of Zionism," explains Jeremy Last, sports editor of the *Jerusalem Post*. "Many Jews living outside Israel want to feel connected to the Jewish state. There is an instant reputation and status which comes with investing in football, as seen with Gaydamak and now Aguiar."

> **"I love Jerusalem, it's special – you're not in Kansas anymore, that's for sure. A lot of people here don't care about anything other than football. I can relate to that"**
>
> *Guma Aguiar*

Fleeting success

While some of these investments brought fleeting success – Beitar won two titles and two cups, Netanya finished second in successive seasons – it wasn't enough. Gaydamak has all but gone, Jammer sacked Matthaus and slashed Netanya's budget and Shnaider sold Maccabi Tel Aviv to fellow Canadian multimillionaire Mitchell Goldhar for a pittance after winning nothing.

"The last year has seen a massive economic downturn and many of these people have been hit hard," says Last. "Some may not understand the media focus that comes with being involved in football. They might think Israel is a small country which focuses on politics and defence, but the sports media here is significant."

Aguiar, though, has consistently denied using Beitar as a stepping stone to political office. Instead, he has chosen a far harder path: to try to take the politics out of Beitar's notoriously right-wing terraces.

"I don't want to use football as a political tool because that's not fair, as an outsider, to come in and have a [political] agenda," he claims. "But the one thing I would like to see is more tolerance from the fans. In order for us to be competitive and attract talent we want to play abroad and not be viewed as total hooligans. I certainly wouldn't want to go to Barcelona and hear them

singing 'death to the Jews'."

Beitar have a sizable hardcore of support known for their violence and racism. Beitar have never had an Arab player turn out for them and when it was mooted that one was to sign the fans rioted and the move was dropped. Chants like "death to the Arabs" have been commonplace in recent years.

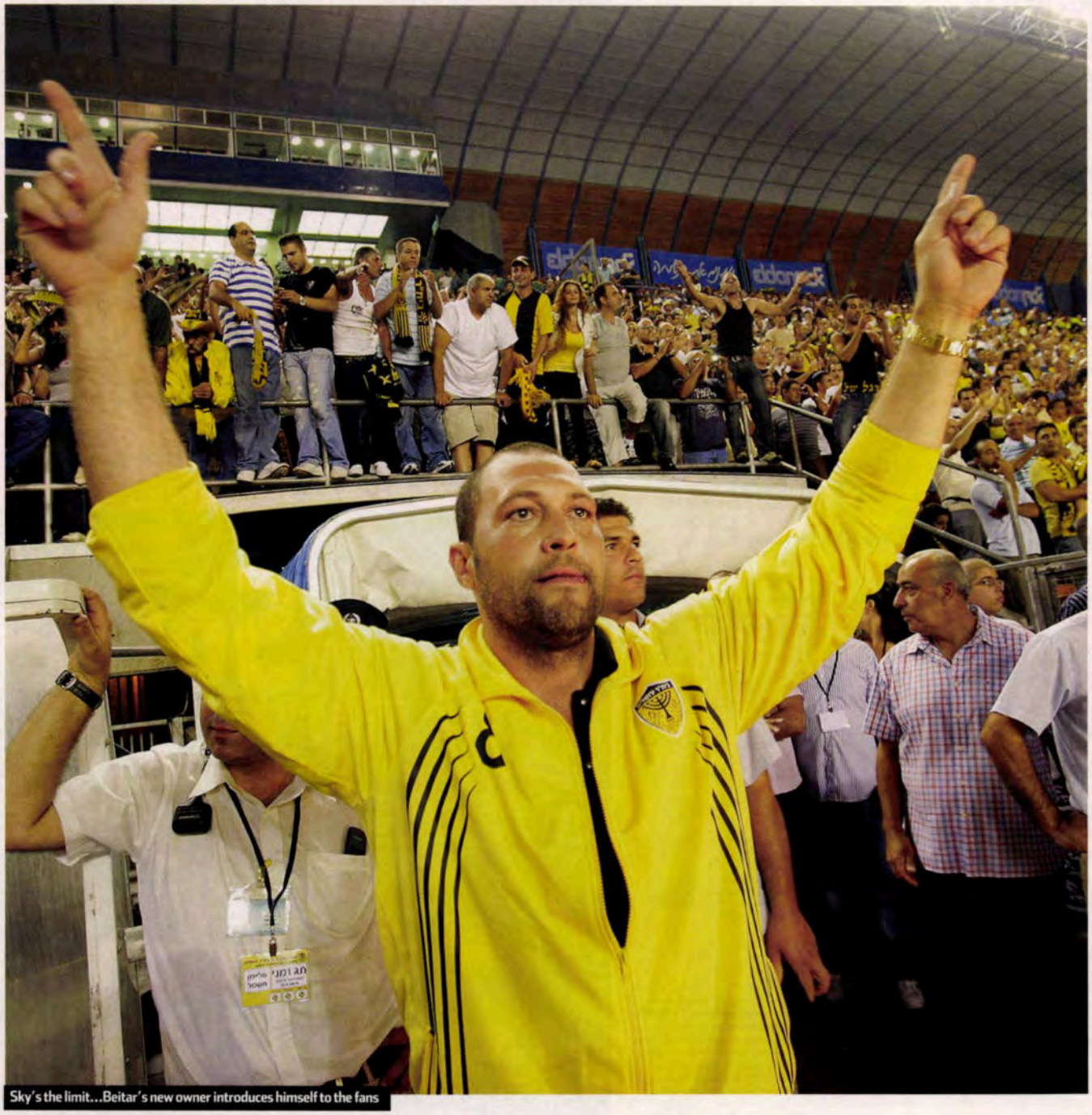
After suffering a points deduction last season as punishment for racist chanting, Beitar's fans responded by attacking the Israeli FA's offices and daubing death threats against the IFA's president on their walls.

> **"The one thing I would like to see is more tolerance from the fans"**

Aguiar believes all this damages Jerusalem's image abroad. "I want to see the flagship name of Jerusalem, bring some outsiders to Israel to visit [and] create awareness about this place," he adds. "Raising the profile of Jerusalem would be the most positive outcome. It's torn apart by a lot of conflict, but there are Christians, Jews and Muslims here that love the land they live in. I want Christian and Muslim fans here too."

Whether Beitar's fans will accept that is another issue, but Aguiar is nothing if not ambitious. He plans on making Jerusalem a football city on a par with Madrid or Milan, and hopes to win the Europa League within two seasons. "The man loves Jerusalem," enthused Beitar legend and TV commentator Danny Neuman on the first day of a crucial one that saw the Israeli league expand from 12 to 16 teams. "He has saved Beitar."

He's right. But the toughest job for Aguiar comes next: saving Beitar from itself. ●



Sky's the limit...Beitar's new owner introduces himself to the fans

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BRAZIL
Dunga delivers

Brazil will travel to South Africa next summer as favourites to win a sixth World Cup. But, says Tim Vickery, it's not been an easy ride for their coach

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, Argentina beaten and World Cup qualification achieved. Brazil coach Dunga was reminded, however, that there were times when the press and public had called for his head.

"They weren't only after my head," he replied. "It was head, body and soul as well.

" There were some unpleasant years. Everything that happened – if there were economic problems, if it was raining – it was all Dunga's fault. But a guy with no experience has won the Copa America, the Confederations Cup, put together a team in six days and come back from the Olympics with a medal, and now qualified for the World Cup three rounds early. Of course I'm very happy, although some people around here might not be."

It was the tone of a man with a lot to get off his chest. His appointment after the last World Cup was widely seen as a stopgap. Dunga was a poor man's Scolari: given the job while the real thing was unavailable. He was merely keeping the seat warm.

Now, 19 games unbeaten, the last 11 of them victories (10 and five respectively in World Cup qualification), Dunga is entitled to gloat. Along the way he has fashioned a team to be feared, a ruthless, winning machine who take the field full of confidence and thoroughly aware of their game plan.

It could have turned out differently – there were a couple of moments when Dunga might have fallen – but, like all good generals, along with competence and commitment, he was blessed with luck when he needed it.

Firstly in the 2007 Copa America. Brazil beat Argentina 3-0 in the Final, but had been fortunate to hold Uruguay to a draw in the semis. In the penalty shoot-out it looked all over. Pablo Garcia, one of Uruguay's most experienced and technically accomplished players, stepped up to take his kick. Score, and Brazil were out. Instead he hit a post. Three inches to the keeper's right and Brazil would have flown home as failures – with the strong chance of a new coach leading them into the World Cup qualifiers.

Then, a year later, Brazil suffered "black June" – a historic defeat by Venezuela in a friendly, well beaten by Paraguay in World Cup qualification and then slightly fortunate to escape with a goalless draw from the home game with Argentina.

"Goodbye Dunga," chanted the crowd in Belo Horizonte. It seemed then that the only thing that could save his job was the Olympic gold medal. It is a title Brazil had never won – and they are still waiting as Dunga's side went down 3-0 to Argentina in the semi-final. But here came his second stroke of luck: World Cup qualification resumed straight afterwards, so there was no time for a new man to take over.

A 3-0 win away to Chile staved off disaster – but things were to get worse before they got better. A 0-0 draw at home to Bolivia was a low point in the history of the national team, and the side were also held by Colombia in their next home match. It meant Brazil had racked up three successive goalless draws in front of their own fans with hardly a chance created. "Goodbye Dunga" rang out again.

But in such adversity a winning formula was found – and perhaps Dunga ended up at a point he never imagined when he took over.

South Africa here we come...Robinho (11) and his team-mates celebrate reaching the final s again

Critical of Parreira

Working for the Brazilian media during the last World Cup – presumably unaware that he would soon take over – Dunga was critical of Carlos Alberto Parreira's Brazil side. He had been Parreira's captain in the 1994 World Cup win, and was surprised that the 2006 side were so deficient in an aspect in which Parreira's teams are traditionally strong: controlled possession.

Indeed, in the early stages of his reign Dunga gave opportunities for elegant midfielder Dudu Cearense, currently of

Let's go...Dunga exhorts his team onward during the 3-1 win over Argentina in Rosario that clinched qualification

Olympiakos, to improve this area of the team's play. Dudu did not perform well and was soon discarded. Instead, Dunga settled on a 4-2-3-1 formation, with a line of Ronaldinho, Kaka and Robinho operating in support of lone striker Luis Fabiano.

It never really convinced. There was a sense that the three of them got in each other's way. So there was a switch, which essentially meant that Ronaldinho dropped out – Dunga had run out patience with his lack of fitness – and a right-sided midfielder, usually Elano, came in.

Friendlies against Portugal (in Brazil) and Italy (in London) were fundamental in bedding in the new model. Against packed defences, the fearsome Maicon would be given licence to burst forward. Elano was there to cover if necessary, and Gilberto Silva could also drop back from midfield and slot across like a third centre-back if required.

Kaka and Robinho now had more space in which to work – emphasised still further by the collective tactic of dropping deep to draw the opposition forward, and then springing at lightning pace and with dazzling skill.

In June's Confederations Cup in South Africa, Brazil gave ample demonstration of the force of their counter-attack. They have grown entitled to believe that a corner for the opposition represents a goalscoring opportunity for themselves.

"Brazil have grown entitled to believe that a corner for the opposition represents a goalscoring opportunity for themselves"

Constant supply

As for their own corners and free-kicks, they are producing a constant supply of goals. Elano strikes with great precision, a phalanx of giant players attack the ball, and there are variations to worry the opposing defence at the near post, far post and in the middle. It was the set-pieces that took the recent game away from Argentina. Diego Maradona's side started well in Rosario, and controlled the opening minutes. But once Luisao had headed home Elano's free-kick there was only one winner. Another free-kick soon provided the second goal, and after the break as Argentina opened up Kaka and Luis Fabiano combined for the perfect counter-attack clincher.

So with a game plan based on counter-attacks and set-pieces, Dunga has hit on a style in which controlled possession is not always necessary. In the June trip to Uruguay, for example, the corner count was 15-2 in the opposition's favour. But Brazil won 4-0.

"We're showing that we're on the right path," said Dunga once qualification had been achieved. "Against Argentina came the confirmation."

Perhaps here he should be careful with his words. His subsequent opponent, Chile coach Marcelo Bielsa, could tell him from experience that, short of crossing the line, there is no such thing as confirmation in World Cup qualifying.

Eight years ago, in charge of his native Argentina, Bielsa charged to a World Cup place in a manner every bit as convincing and impressive as Dunga's Brazil. Bielsa's team were justly included among the tournament favourites. Come 2002, though, everything went wrong. Argentina were eliminated in the first round, and history has judged the side more on their World Cup flop than their gallop to qualification.

Argentina's 2002 team were so highly rated going into the competition because many saw them as an excellent blend of South American skill and European dynamism. Perhaps the label applies even better to Dunga's men.

Brazil have a huge, imposing group of players with the look of a basketball team. The long-term aim of matching the Europeans in physical terms, given an impetus by the loss to Holland in 1974, has been achieved and then some. But in key attacking positions, extra strength has been attained at no cost to speed or skill – as some of their counter-attacking goals bear witness.

Up for grabs

Of course there are risks in their current approach. The left-back (the one position in the side that still looks up for grabs) lacks protection and Brazil had real recent problems coping with Chile winger Alexis Sanchez. Inviting the opposition forward has forced a number of top-class displays from keeper Julio Cesar and centre-back Lucio – an off day for either could be bad news. And a lack of central-midfield passing elaboration can leave them looking laboured against opponents cute enough to block their favourite avenues.

But with qualification in the bag early, Dunga has the luxury of time to experiment with a Plan B. Diego was discarded after the Olympic campaign, but has made an impressive start with Juventus and could be worth a recall. Anderson's progress at Manchester United will be followed closely. And Dunga has said that the door is still open for Ronaldinho if he can get back in shape.

Complacency would seem an improbable enemy. Unlike the 2006 squad, Dunga's Brazil are not built around bohemian stars. The religious fervour of the two senior players, Lucio and Kaka, sets the tone for a Brazil of rigour and sobriety.

Come the draw in December they will not be the only ones praying. Lots of other sides, however, will be hoping that they are not placed in the same group as Dunga's Brazil. ●

Team bonding...Brazil celebrate after scoring against Argentina

QUALIFIER NO 6

BRAZIL

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
Top of the South American qualifying section, on 33 points, 11 ahead of fifth-placed Argentina, with two games remaining.

PREVIOUS FINALS APPEARANCES
1930: group stage. 1934: first-round defeat by Spain. 1938: third place. 1950: runners-up to Uruguay. 1954: quarter-final defeat by Hungary. 1958: winners. 1962: winners. 1966: group stage. 1970: winners. 1974: fourth place. 1978: third place. 1982: second group phase. 1986: quarter-final defeat by France. 1990: second-round defeat by Argentina. 1994: winners. 1998: runners-up to France. 2002: winners. 2006: quarter-final loss to France.

NICKNAME
The *Selecao*.

THE COACH
Dunga, captain of the 1994 World Cup-winning side, who has moulded a team in his own gritty image.

KEY PLAYERS
Ever-present keeper Julio Cesar, centre-back Lucio, attacking fulcrum Kaka, centre-forward Luis Fabiano.

FIFA WORLD RANKING
1

RECORD IN QUALIFICATION
P16 W9 D6 L1 F32 A9

PLAYERS USED IN QUALIFICATION
39

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN QUALIFICATION
Luis Fabiano (9), Kaka (5), Nilmar (4), Robinho (4).

DISCIPLINE
31 yellows, 3 reds.

TYPICAL LINE-UP
(4-2-3-1)
Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Juan, Kleber - Felipe Melo, Gilberto Silva - Robinho, Kaka, Elano - Luis Fabiano.

Top finish...Luis Fabiano's double against Argentina took his total to nine in qualifying

QUALIFIER NO 7

GHANA

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
Top of African Group 3, following four consecutive wins over Benin, Mali and Sudan. Topped earlier group containing Gabon, Libya and Lesotho.

PREVIOUS FINALS APPEARANCES
2006: quarter-final exit to Brazil.

NICKNAME
The Black Stars.

THE COACH
Milovan Rajevac, a Serbian who succeeded Claude Le Roy in August 2008. Former coach of Red Star Belgrade.

KEY PLAYERS
Midfielders Michael Essien, Sulley Muntari and Stephen Appiah.

FIFA WORLD RANKING 32

RECORD IN QUALIFICATION
P10 W8 D0 L2 F18 A5

PLAYERS USED IN QUALIFICATION
27

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN QUALIFICATION
Junior Agogo (4), Matthew Amoah (4).

DISCIPLINE
15 yellows, 0 reds.

TYPICAL LINE-UP
(4-4-2)
Kingson - Inkoom, Pantsil, Mensah, Afful - Essien, Annan, Addo, Muntari - Amoah, Agogo.

All go...Junior Agogo was joint-top scorer in Ghana's qualifying campaign

QUALIFIER NO 8

ENGLAND

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
Topped European Group 6 following eight consecutive wins, most significantly at home and away to Croatia.

PREVIOUS FINALS APPEARANCES
1950: group stage; 1954: quarter-final defeat by Uruguay; 1958: group stage; 1962: quarter-final defeat by Brazil; 1966: winners; 1970: quarter-final defeat by West Germany; 1982: second group phase; 1986: quarter-final defeat by Argentina; 1990: semi-final defeat on penalties by West Germany; 1998: second round defeat on penalties by Argentina; 2002: quarter-final defeat by Brazil; 2006: quarter-final defeat on penalties by Portugal.

THE COACH
Fabio Capello, Italian who has installed discipline and a new sense of purpose into an underachieving squad.

KEY PLAYERS
Forward Wayne Rooney and midfielder Steven Gerrard.

FIFA WORLD RANKING 7

RECORD IN QUALIFICATION
P8 W8 D0 L0 F31 A5

PLAYERS USED IN QUALIFICATION
26

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN QUALIFICATION
Wayne Rooney (9), Frank Lampard (4), Steven Gerrard(3), Theo Walcott (3).

DISCIPLINE
6 yellows, 0 reds.

TYPICAL LINE-UP
(4-2-3-1)
James – Johnson, Terry, Ferdinand, A Cole – Barry, Lampard – Lennon, Rooney, Gerrard – Heskey.

Wayne's world...Rooney hits a spectacular volley for England's third goal in Kazakhstan

QUALIFIER NO 9

SPAIN

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
Top of European Group 5 following eight consecutive wins.

PREVIOUS FINALS APPEARANCES
1934: quarter-final defeat by Italy; 1950: fourth place; 1962: group stage; 1966: group stage; 1990: second round defeat by Yugoslavia; 1994: quarter-final defeat by Italy; 1998: group stage; 2002: quarter-final defeat by South Korea; 2006: second round defeat by France.

THE COACH
Vicente Del Bosque, former coach of Real Madrid who has overseen an effortless transition from Euro 2008-winning boss Luis Aragones.

KEY PLAYERS
Midfielders Xavi, Andres Iniesta and Xabi Alonso, strikers Fernando Torres and David Villa.

FIFA WORLD RANKING 2

RECORD IN QUALIFICATION
P8 W8 D0 L0 F21 A2

PLAYERS USED IN QUALIFICATION
26

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN QUALIFICATION
David Villa (7), Gerard Pique (2), David Silva (2).

DISCIPLINE
10 yellows, 0 reds.

TYPICAL LINE-UP
(4-4-2)
Casillas – Ramos, Pique, Puyol, Capdevila - Iniesta, Xavi, Xabi Alonso, Silva - Villa, Torres.

Eye on the ball...David Villa's goals have taken Spain to South Africa

QUALIFIER NO 10

PARAGUAY

HOW THEY QUALIFIED
With two matches remaining from the South American qualifying section. Suffered a blip in June, when defeated at home by Chile then away by Brazil, but rallied in September to beat Bolivia and Argentina in Asuncion to secure qualification for their fourth successive finals.

PREVIOUS FINALS APPEARANCES
1930: group stage; 1950: group stage; 1958: group stage; 1986: second round defeat by England; 1998: second round defeat by France; 2002: second round defeat by Germany; 2006: group stage.

NICKNAME
La Albirroja (whites and reds).

THE COACH
Gerardo Martino, Argentinian who won Paraguayan league titles with Libertad and Cerro Porteno.

KEY PLAYERS
Striker Nelson Haedo Valdez, midfielders Cristian Riveros and Victor Caceres.

FIFA WORLD RANKING 23

RECORD IN QUALIFICATION
P16 W9 D3 L4 F22 A13

PLAYERS USED IN QUALIFICATION
32

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN QUALIFICATION
Nelson Haedo Valdez (5), Salvador Cabanas (5), Cristian Riveros (3), Roque Santa Cruz (3).

DISCIPLINE
39 yellows, 2 reds.

TYPICAL LINE-UP
(4-4-2)
Villar - Veron, Da Silva, J Caceres, Morel - Barreto, V Caceres, Vera, Riveros - Valdez, Cabanas.

Heads we win...Salvador Cabanas (left) and Nelson Haedo Valdez enjoy beating Argentina

AFRICA

Ghana lead way to finals

QUALIFIED
Ghana

ON COURSE
Algeria
Cameroon
Ivory Coast
Tunisia

STILL HOPEFUL
Egypt
Gabon
Nigeria
Togo

GHANA BECAME the first country to qualify from Africa's World Cup preliminary campaign, keeping up their 100 per cent record to build an unassailable lead in Group D.

Neighbours Ivory Coast have also won all four of their matches in their final group phase but they still need a point from their last two matches in Group E to be mathematically sure of going to South Africa.

The three other qualifying groups will likely go down to the final weekend of matches in November, with Algeria, Cameroon and Tunisia well placed to make up the quota of African qualifiers.

Ghana had seen off the challenge of Mali in June to set themselves up for an easy run-in, and when Mali were held in Benin, conceding a goal three minutes from time, it left the Black Stars, who kicked off two hours later, needing to beat bottom-placed Sudan at home to begin their celebratory party.

The 2-0 win proved routine with an early goal from Sulley Muntari settling nerves and then Michael Essien driving home a long-range shot in the second half. Sudan, who have overhauled their side considerably in recent months, looked tired from the effects of fasting during the Ramadan period, even on match day.

The Ivorians cannot be overtaken on points, only on goal difference, and would therefore need to suffer two heavy defeats in their last matches, away to Malawi and home to Guinea, to be denied a trip to South Africa.

Black Stars shining...Essien (centre) scored the goal that clinched Ghana's qualification

Hopeful...Nigeria's Peter Odemwingie takes on Tunisia

That is unlikely to happen on the evidence of their one-sided thrashing of second-placed Burkina Faso, who had five put past them. Two of the goals came from Didier Drogba, who missed the first part of the qualifiers last year but is now fully in his stride.

The match was played in front of a reduced-capacity crowd of 20,000 at the Felix Houphouet-Boigny stadium in Abidjan. The previous Ivorian home match in March saw some 20 people die in crush of spectators.

Cameroon have engineered a turnabout in their fortunes from last to first place in Group A, winning their catch-up game 2-0 against Gabon in Librevillle, and then deposing the group leaders again five days later, winning 2-1 at home in Yaounde. Samuel Eto'o scored in both matches.

Cameroon's one-point lead in the group was also secured after Togo failed to beat Morocco in Lome, in their first home match after an effective one-year ban. Adel Taarabt came on as a substitute and dribbled through the Togo defence in stoppage time to force a 1-1 draw.

Nigeria and Tunisia drew for a second successive game, with Oussama Darragi also scoring a dramatic last-gasp equaliser for the visitors. The 2-2 scoreline in Abuja means Tunisia stay top of Group B with a two-point advantage and they will qualify if they beat Kenya at home and then Mozambique away their last two matches.

Nigeria have to rely on the Tunisians slipping up, but having done the hard work it is difficult to see that happening, condemning Africa's most populous nation to miss out on a second successive World Cup finals.

Algeria's revival continued in Group C, but their 1-0 win over Zambia in Blida was tinged in controversy when their visitors were denied a legitimate-looking equaliser.

Algeria are three points ahead of defending African champions Egypt, who had veteran midfielder Ahmed Hassan to thank for the 67th-minute goal that gave them victory in Rwanda.

Mark Gleeson

"Sudan looked tired from the effects of fasting during Ramadan, even on match day"

ASIA

Last-gasp Bahrain reach play-offs

QUALIFIED
Australia
Japan
South Korea
North Korea

PLAY-OFFS
Bahrain

BAHRAIN'S amazing run continues with Milan Macala's side preparing to face New Zealand in November's Asia-Oceania play-off after a dramatic victory on away goals over Saudi Arabia in the Asian section play-off.

The Saudis were left to regret missed opportunities in front of goal after the first leg in Bahrain ended goalless. In the return, they led through Nasser Al Shamrani but Bahrain equalised five minutes before the break through Jaycee John.

Conscious that the draw would send Bahrain through on away goals, the Saudis continued to press forward in the second half and were rewarded late in the game when Hamad Al Montashari struck in injury time.

But just as Saudi celebrations in Riyadh's King Fahd stadium started in earnest, Ismaeel Latif replied to secure a 2-2 draw.

"It was a tough match as we played this crucial match in front of Saudi fans," said Macala. "I talked to my players before the game and advised them not to look for goals as I expected the Saudis to attack."

Saudi Arabia coach Jose Peseiro was annoyed his team had not taken their chances in front of goal. "We could have scored three goals at least," he said. "But my players did the role I asked of them and the defeat is my responsibility."

Bahrain fell at the final hurdle four years ago when they lost a two-legged play-off to Trinidad & Tobago. They now have a chance to make amends.

John Holmesdale

Shock...Bahrain celebrate their draw

CONCACAF

Tables turned on Ticos

ON COURSE
Honduras
Mexico
USA

STILL HOPEFUL
Costa Rica

COSTA RICA, who were leaders of the six-team qualifying section going into September, lost to Mexico and El Salvador and plummeted to fourth place, outside of the automatic qualifying berths.

Meanwhile, victories for USA – over El Salvador and Trinidad & Tobago – and Mexico, over Costa Rica and Honduras – took the region's two most powerful teams back to the top of the table.

USA recovered from conceding to El Salvador to score twice late in the first half in a match played in Utah to maximise local support against their Hispanic opposition.

Cristian Castillo had given El Salvador a 1-0 lead in the 32nd minute with a header over USA goalkeeper Tim Howard. But Clint Dempsey equalised in the 41st minute when he headed in Landon Donovan's free-kick. Donovan also supplied the cross in first-half injury time for Jozy Altidore's winner.

"I think what stood out after the goal was the strong response from everybody on the field," said USA coach Bob Bradley. "That says a lot about what these guys are all about. They understand how difficult these games are and how competitive they are.

"El Salvador are very well coached and they play hard every game, so nobody has an easy game against them."

Four days later, the Americans travelled to Trinidad and Tobago where Ricardo Clark's 62nd-minute goal was enough to end the Trinidadians' qualifying hopes.

Threat...El Salvador's Rodolfo Zelaya takes on Costa Rica

Mexico, having previously struggled away from home, won 3-0 in Costa Rica, where Giovani Dos Santos was the star of the show. At home to Honduras four days later, a penalty from Cuauhtemoc Blanco was enough to ensure victory.

The Costa Ricans suffered a shock defeat to El Salvador in San Salvador, Rudis Corrales scored a dramatic injury-time winner – a result which prompted the departure of coach Rodrigo Kenton.

In-form Carlos Pavon was on target twice for Honduras as they beat Trinidad & Tobago. The defeat away to Mexico was a blow, but Costa Rica's poor results meant Honduras held on to the final automatic qualifying spot.

The day had started with the top four teams (Honduras, USA, Mexico and Costa Rica) separated by one point, but USA and Mexico now look in promising positions for the final two rounds of matches.

John Holmesdale

EUROPE

Two more book their places

QUALIFIED
England
Holland
Spain

ON COURSE
Denmark
Germany
Italy
Serbia
Slovakia
Switzerland

SET FOR PLAY-OFFS
Bosnia
France
Republic of Ireland
Russia

STILL HOPEFUL
Czech Republic
Croatia
Greece
Hungary
Latvia
Northern Ireland
Portugal
Slovenia
Sweden
Ukraine

ENGLAND AND Spain reached next year's finals with two matches remaining after maintaining their 100 per cent records in the qualifying campaign.

England coach Fabio Capello expressed his satisfaction after watching his side beat Croatia 5-1 at Wembley to win Group 6. The result and performance were in marked contrast to the last time the visitors played at the stadium, two years previously, when England's then-coach Steve McClaren watched his team go down 3-2 and miss out on qualification for Euro 2008.

Qualification was a personal triumph for Capello, whose single-minded approach restored confidence and prompted his opposite number, Slaven Bilic, to speculate that England could triumph in South Africa next summer. "If they manage to play like this then of course they can win it," he said.

Croatia remain on track for the play-offs because Ukraine dropped points away to Belarus and remain in third place.

Spain qualified in similarly emphatic style as Group 5 winners, with 5-0 and 3-0 victories over Belgium and Estonia respectively, while Bosnia are on course for the play-offs after drawing 1-1 with closest challengers Turkey.

Almost there...Vladimir Weiss and Slovakia

Heading for South Africa...Steven Gerard (far right) puts England 2-0 up against Croatia

France and Portugal, runners-up and semi-finalists respectively at Germany in 2006, remain in danger of missing out this time. France are resigned to the play-offs after 1-1 draws with Romania and Serbia, while Portugal revived their campaign with a 1-1 draw in Denmark and a 1-0 win over Hungary but could still lose out.

Denmark are the favourites to finish ahead of Portugal in Group 1 after their draw in Copenhagen, with second place a three-way fight between Sweden, Portugal and Hungary.

Switzerland knocked Greece off the top of Group 2 after a 2-0 triumph in Basle. Late goals from veteran Stephane Grichting and Marko Padalino gave Ottmar Hitzfeld's side victory after Loukas Vyntra was sent off.

In Group 3, Slovakia's remarkable campaign continues. Vladimir Weiss' side extended their lead to five points following a 2-2 draw with the Czech Republic in Bratislava and a 2-0 away win over Northern Ireland. In an eventful second half against the Czechs, Marek Hamsik converted a penalty to give Slovakia a 2-1 lead with 17 minutes to go but was sent off for a second bookable offence and Milan Baros grabbed a late equaliser.

After dropping points to their neighbours, the Czechs will now struggle to reach the play-offs and need Slovenia to drop points in their remaining games. Slovenia moved into second place after a 3-0 win over Poland, who sacked coach Leo Beenhakker.

In Group 4, Germany warmed up for their crucial visit to Russia on October 10 with a 4-0 defeat of Azerbaijan, while the Russians won 3-1 in Wales. A point in Moscow will leave Germany needing to beat Finland at home in their final game to secure automatic qualification.

Serbia are on course to top Group 7 after their draw with France in Belgrade and will ensure qualification by beating Romania at home in their next game.

Italy got back on track in Group 8 with victories over Georgia and Bulgaria, but Scotland's 1-0 defeat at home to Holland ended their qualification hopes in Group 9. Norway finished as runners-up but are set to miss the play-offs as they are the second-placed team with the least number of points.

John Holmesdale

"Qualification was a triumph for Capello, whose single-minded approach restored confidence"

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina in danger

QUALIFIED
Brazil
Paraguay

ON COURSE
Chile

STILL HOPEFUL
Argentina
Colombia
Ecuador
Uruguay

PERU'S win over Uruguay in Lima was the first of several surprises in September's World Cup qualifiers in South America as results could have gone Argentina's way – if only Diego Maradona had known how to take advantage.

Peru, who had lost eight in a row – six of them qualifiers – were bottom of the regional group and out of the running for a place in South Africa, extending to seven the number of successive World Cups they would miss.

Uruguay, who were aiming at least to get into the play-off against a CONCACAF team and ought to have had a draw, were devastated when Hernan Rengifo scored in the 85th minute to give Peru a 1-0 win.

Fans back home threatened to stay away from the Centenario for Uruguay's next match, against Colombia four days later, as the media slammed the players and coach Oscar Washington Tabarez.

Ecuador, lying fifth and in possession of that play-off berth, were the next team to slip up. They were the better team but lost 2-0 to two goals by Jackson Martinez and Teofilo Gutierrez in the last nine minutes away to Colombia in Medellin after their substitute Pablo Palacios had been sent off three minutes into the second half.

Victory now put Colombia into the play-off position, above Ecuador on goal difference and meant that Argentina, thanks to these results, were still in the last of the four automatic qualifying positions before kicking off against Brazil in Rosario.

But, just as in the friendly in London in September 2006 and, more pointedly, the Copa America Final in Venezuela less than a year later, Argentina played into Brazil's hands, allowing themselves to be hit on the break despite dominating possession. A 3-1 win secured Brazil's place in the finals with three games to spare.

Paraguay beat Bolivia 1-0 at home to end a poor run this year that had allowed Brazil, and more recently Chile, to overtake them in the standings. The win, with a penalty by Salvador Cabanas, ended 1994 finalists Bolivia's interest in the World Cup.

Paraguay's recovery, having taken one point out of the previous 12 this year, was an extra worry for Argentina.

Chile, meanwhile, were held 2-2 at home by surprising Venezuela, postponing their virtually assured place in the finals for the first time since 1998.

And the next round of qualifiers four days later definitely did not go Argentina's way. It started with Ecuador's stroll to a 3-1 win over Bolivia in La Paz, not a daunting place for an Ecuadorean team also used to playing home games at altitude, even if not quite the 3,600 metres of the Bolivian capital.

Ecuador climbed into fourth place, pushing Argentina down into fifth before they kicked off against Paraguay in Asuncion.

Uruguay, selling tickets at two for the price of one, enticed disgruntled fans to the Centenario and rewarded them with a 3-1 win over Colombia that got their challenge back on track. They were now just one point behind Argentina in sixth place and one above Colombia. "There was football, pride and commitment. This squad are alive," said Uruguay boss Tabarez.

Venezuela quickly put out the fires of Peru's mini-revival, beating them 3-1 at home in Puerto La Cruz with a Nicolas Fedor double to keep level on points with Uruguay.

Brazil – fielding half a dozen reserves after suspension had deprived them of Kaka, Luis Fabiano, captain Lucio and Ramires, and injury of Robinho – spoilt Chile's hopes of early qualification with a 4-2 home win in Salvador, striker Nilmar hitting a hat-trick.

Marcelo Bielsa's Chile had come from behind to level at 2-2 with Humberto Suazo's second goal early in the second half. His first goal was Chile's first in five qualifying matches in Brazil. Chile could have snatched a victory but were laid low by Brazil's superior finishing on the counter-attack.

Chilean fans could be forgiven for worrying. In October's last two rounds, they need two points to be sure of qualification from a visit to Colombia and a final home match with Ecuador, though one should be enough given their good goal difference.

Argentina knew by then that – after their 1-0 defeat in Asuncion, a goal by Nelson Haedo Valdez sending Paraguay to their fourth finals in a row – their task is the hardest. They have plenty of individual talent but no longer look like a team.

Argentina can no longer be sure of three points from their home game against Peru in October before heading to Montevideo four days later for another edition of the "Battle of the River Plate" against Uruguay, quite possibly for World Cup survival.

Not to see Diego Forlan at the World Cup would be a pity but somehow expected. To lose Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero would be unthinkable.

Rex Gowar

Flying...Colombia's Gutierrez scores against Ecuador

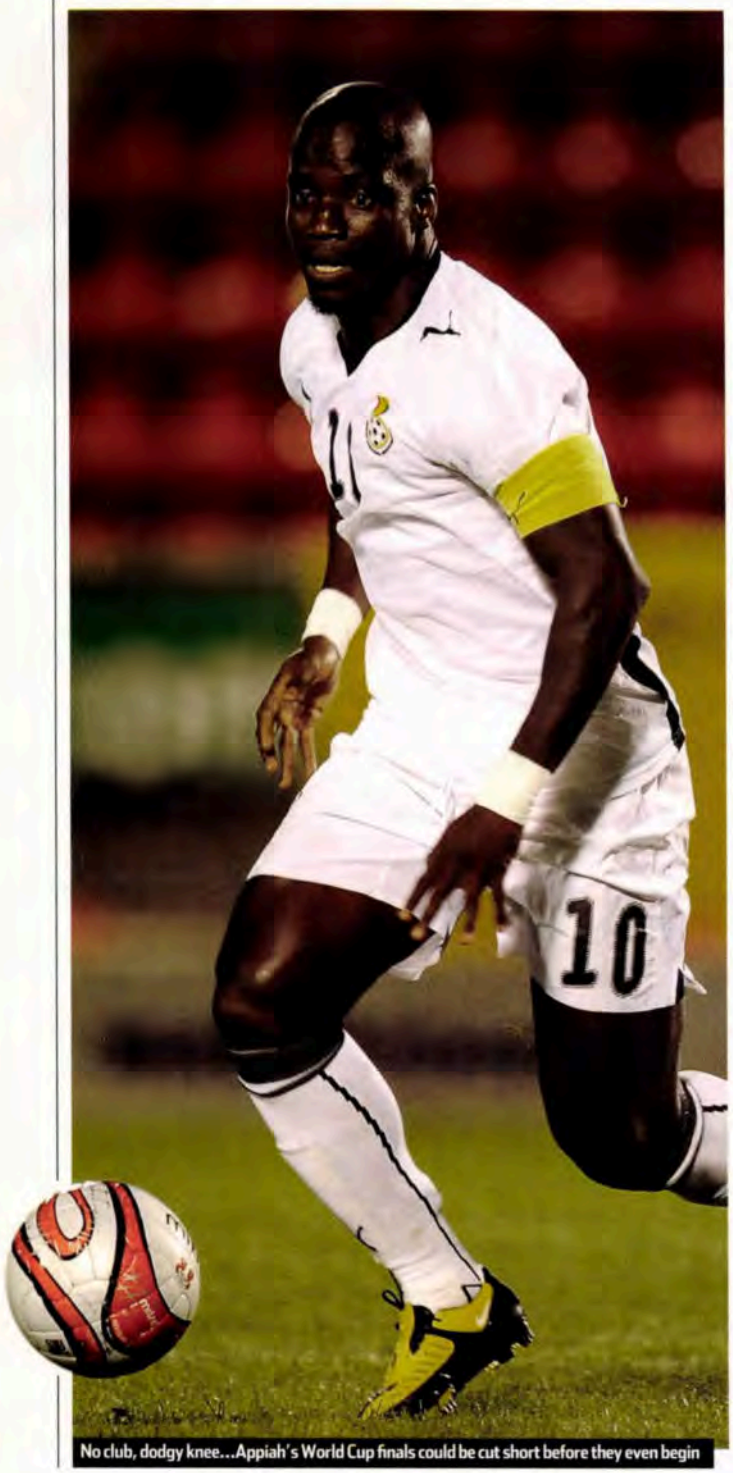
Winning hand...Peru's Rengifo hails his goal against Uruguay

"To lose Lionel Messi and Sergio Aguero from the World Cup would be unthinkable"

GHANA

Stephen Appiah

Ghana's captain is a crucial figure for the Black Stars but he doesn't have a club



No club, dodgy knee...Appiah's World Cup finals could be cut short before they even begin

STEPHEN APPIAH last played a club match two years ago, but despite the lack of practice he continues to be a driving force for Ghana's Black Stars.

As he trooped off after 73 minutes of the 2-0 home win over Sudan, a result that ensured Ghana became the first side to qualify from Africa's preliminaries for the 2010 World Cup finals, there was a standing ovation for the captain.

"It was touching, especially after the difficulties of the last two years. To see a full stadium applaud as I left was special," said Appiah as his team celebrated qualifying for a second successive World Cup.

But whether Appiah will be there remains to be seen. The level of incredulity at his continued participation for the Black Stars increases with each passing game.

Appiah has played a fulsome part in the qualifiers, and in recent friendlies too, but that is the only playing time he is getting. He is embroiled in several legal disputes while concern over a dodgy knee and doubt over his real date of birth dog hopes he will get a new club. Trials with several English Premier League clubs in recent months came to nothing and similar efforts to land contracts in Italy and with Russian champions Rubin Kazan also ended without any offers.

The "difficulties" Appiah talks of are numerous and a far cry from the days when he was midfield master at Juventus and then went off on a big-money transfer to Fenerbahce in Turkey.

In Italy he has just lost the first of three judicial cases brought against him by former agents and lawyers. He has been ordered to pay an outstanding debt of £515,000 to former agent Santiago Morazzo and is being sued for a combined similar amount by two other lawyers.

More devastating is the loss of his case against Fenerbahce, who he walked out on at the end of 2007, weeks before Ghana hosted the African Nations Cup finals, a tournament he had to sit out because of the knee problem.

Two years ago Appiah suffered a thrombosis that nearly killed him, caused by inadequate rehabilitation from knee surgery some months previously.

Appiah claimed Fenerbahce were to blame and walked out. The club counter-sued for breach of contract, Appiah lost and has since been ordered to pay them £2.7million compensation.

Appiah, whose official date of birth is listed as December 28, 1980, but would therefore have been an implausible 15 when he made his national team debut, is now caught in the limbo of being a player who believes he is still worth a substantive wage with a quality team but is finding few prepared to take a gamble.

He lives mostly in Brescia and trains sometimes with the local Serie B club, but even they have not thought it worthwhile to offer him even a short-term deal.

The Black Stars are his current salvation, but if Appiah is continue to be inactive there is every temptation for coach Milovan Rajevac to dump him as the World Cup finals get closer – never mind how influential a figure he is in the Ghana squad.

Mark Gleeson

"The incredulity at his participation increases with each passing game"

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SIX OF THE BEST MULTI

Nick Bidwell profiles half a dozen of the game's most-travelled professionals

Sebastian ABREU
ARIS SALONIKA

SIXTEEN CLUBS and counting. In a career which began 13 years ago, the gangling Uruguay striker has been most unwilling to put down roots, preferring to flit from team to team in his homeland, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Israel and now Greece.

Known affectionately as *Loco* (the crazy one), Abreu has proved a prolific marksman in the Americas, particularly with Mexican sides Dorados, Cruz Azul and Tecos, Argentina's San Lorenzo and River Plate, and Nacional and Defensor – his first club – in Uruguay.

Mexico is a favourite haunt of the 32-year-old. There he has worn the colours of seven sides and finished top of the goalscoring charts four times. By way of contrast, European football has provided him with far fewer highs. He made little impact at Deportivo La Coruna and Beitar Jerusalem, though he did do himself justice last season on loan at Spanish second division club Real Sociedad.

Abreu signed a 12-month deal with Aris in July. Despite his "have boots, will travel" reputation, only one club is close to his heart – Nacional of Montevideo. He has supported them since childhood and owns a box at their stadium.

AILTON
CHONGQING LIFAN

APART FROM A SIX-YEAR spell in the German Bundesliga with Werder Bremen – a golden period from 1998 to 2004 in which he scored 88 goals in 169 games, starred in a league-and-cup double and was voted the country's Player of the Year in 2004 – the barrel-chested Brazilian striker has committed himself to the life of the true footballing itinerant, never in one place long enough to personalise his locker and currently at his 17th place of work.

Pre- and post-Bremen he has adhered to the same mantra: be the ultimate rolling stone and never stay anywhere longer than a season. Since leaving Werder five years ago, his decline has been rapid and it has been sad to witness his long and futile trek in search of past glories at Schalke, Besiktas, Hamburg, Red Star Belgrade, Grasshopper, MSV Duisburg, Metalurh Donetsk, Altach in Austria, Brazilian second division team Campinense and, currently, Chinese club Chongqing Lifan, whom the 36-year-old joined this summer.

In his Werder heyday, Ailton used to combine explosive finishing with bouts of ill-discipline off the pitch. Now, sadly, we only have the latter.

Igor BUDAN
PALERMO

THE CROATIA STRIKER owes his place in the pantheon of club-hoppers to the Italian transfer network, their love affair with temporary deals and a system that allows clubs to share the ownership rights to players.

From the moment he set foot on the peninsula, having left NK Rijeka for Venezia in 1999, Budan has not stopped riding this particular carousel. He was farmed out twice by Venezia (first to Empoli, then to Bellinzona in Switzerland), four times by Palermo (to Venezia, Ancona, Atalanta and Parma) and once by Atalanta (destination Ascoli). In a decade, Budan has played for seven Serie A and B sides, his longest stint being two-and-a-half years at Atalanta from June 2003 to December 2005.

Currently on the books of Sicily's finest, Palermo, he missed much of last season with a knee injury but is back in the thick of it this term. Although he does not boast the technical polish usually associated with Croat attackers, he is a highly effective target man, bristling with muscle, aerial power and determination, and small, nimble front-line partners feed royally off his knock-downs. He has won six full caps for Croatia and was a member of their Euro 2008 squad.

-CLUB PLAYERS

Cristiano LUCARELLI
LIVORNO

IT WOULD BE easy to look at the ever-changing backdrops to the Italian striker's career – 11 clubs to date – and conclude that he is a hard-hearted mercenary whose sole motivation is a fat signing-on fee. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Lucarelli, 33, is confirmed communist not at all obsessed with material wealth and who took a pay-cut , in 2007 to join his home-town club, Livorno.

Lucarelli has something of the Cantona in him: an adventurer who is always looking for new experiences. After starting out at minor Tuscan club Cuoiopelli, he went walkabout all over Italy, playing for Perugia, Cosenza, Padova, Atalanta, Lecce, Torino, Parma and Livorno, where he is in a second spell.

He has also taken the expatriate route at Valencia and Shakhtar Donetsk, but did not settle at either. Always among the goals in Serie A – he has amassed 108 so far – his best campaign was in 2003-04, with 24 goals for Livorno good enough to make him Italy's top finisher. Wearer of the number 99 shirt – in honour of a left-wing group of Livorno fans which was founded in 1999 – his politics have rendered him a marginal figure. Without that manifesto, he may well have won more than six senior caps.

Junichi INAMOTO
RENNES

SEVERAL FACTORS have kept Japan's defensive midfielder shuttling to and from seven clubs in England, Turkey, Germany and France since leaving J.League side Gamba Osaka for Arsenal in 2001. While a succession of injuries have not helped his cause, at times it has been hard to overcome the sceptical view that he was only employed for marketing reasons and, as a player, was over-hyped.

Yes, Inamoto was the Nippon golden boy, at 17 the youngest-ever J.League player and scorer, and a member of the Japan Under-20 side that were runners-up at the 1999 World Youth Cup. However, those achievements were no guarantee of success as an import and his time in Europe has been decidedly mixed: rejected at Arsenal, better on loan at Fulham and Cardiff City, average at West Bromwich Albion and Eintracht Frankfurt, disappointing in Turkey with Galatasaray.

On his day, he is a good midfield holder, enthusiastic, busy, strong in the tackle and a good passer of the ball. However, his form was never compelling enough for clubs to regard him as indispensable. He joined Rennes this summer on a free from Frankfurt and is banking on a good showing to propel him into Japan's 2010 World Cup squad.

Carlos PAVON
REAL ESPANA

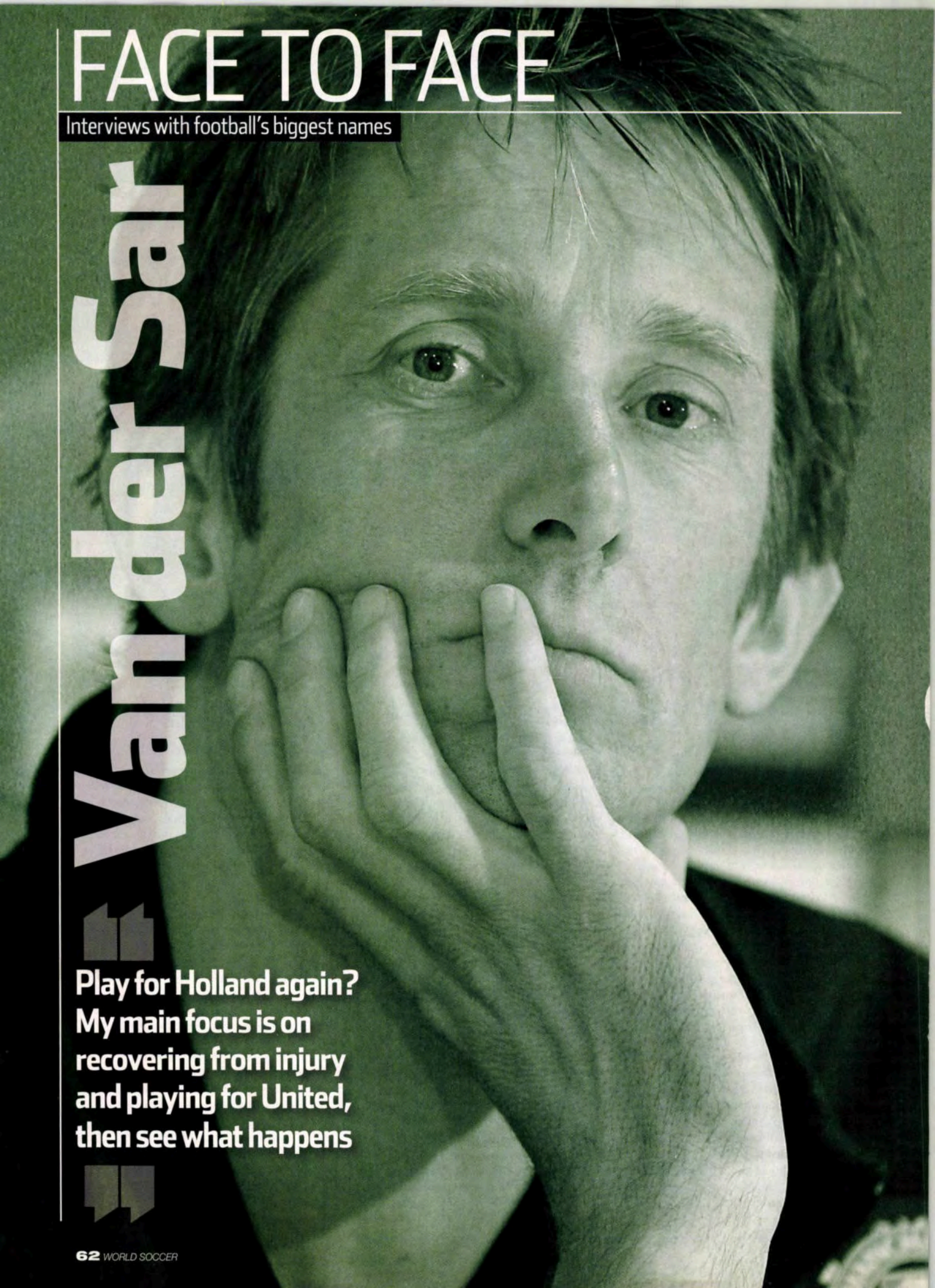
THE ALL-TIME leading scorer for Honduras with 55 goals in 90 internationals, and very much to the fore as *La Bicolor* push for a place at next year's World Cup finals, the evergreen 35-year-old Pavon is one of the game's most committed globe-trotters, earning a living at string of clubs in his native land, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, the United States, Spain and Italy.

Stints with top Honduran club Real Espana have bookended a glorious 17-year career. But what a grand tour in between: in Mexico with Toluca, Necaxa, Atletico Celaya, Cruz Azul, Correcaminos and Morelia, Spain with Valladolid, Napoli and Udinese of Serie A, Communicaciones in Guatemala, Colombia's Deportivo Cali, then to the United States and LA Galaxy, where he teamed up with David Beckham in 2007.

Of his 15 clubs, Real Espana are the side which means the most to the *Sombra Voladora* (Flyer of the Shadows). He has played for them in five separate spells and helped the club win domestic league titles in 1992, 2004 and 2007. When he does eventually hang up his boots, it is highly likely that Pavon will go straight from the point of attack to the head coach's office.

FACE TO FACE

Interviews with football's biggest names



Van der Sar

"Play for Holland again? My main focus is on recovering from injury and playing for United, then see what happens"

Edwin Van der Sar

The Manchester United No1 reflects on his career after receiving his award as ESM Goalkeeper of the Year

Tall tales

How did you become a goalkeeper?
My uncle was also a professional player so football was in the family. When I was a kid, because I was already tall, I was a centre-half then suddenly, one day, our goalkeeper wasn't there – he had a party to go to or something, I don't know, we were only eight or nine years old – and the manager said: "Edwin, you're the tallest, you're in goal today," and probably I did quite well and was never allowed to play out again. Maybe my other football skills weren't so good so they preferred to keep me in goal.

When you came to the Premier League with Fulham was it with a view to using them as a stepping stone to a bigger club?
Juventus to Fulham does seem a strange move, maybe, but I wanted to play for the Dutch national team so I needed to play for a club and Fulham had a good project: they had money, a newly rebuilt stadium and Premier League football, so I thought it was a good move all round. Then, after the first couple of seasons, things didn't progress there and started to go down a bit. So I started thinking about getting a chance at a bigger club and it was my good fortune that I was able to sign for United.

How are Manchester United coping without Cristiano Ronaldo?
We had to change the way we play because he has been such a good player for United but now he's gone. Of course we wish him all the best and it is strange without him but we still have 11 players on the pitch and we have to make sure all the players score the goals now. Wayne Rooney has started well and we have brought in one or two players such as Antonio Valencia and Michael Owen – on a free transfer – so hopefully all the other players can stand up a little bit and contribute together the way Cristiano did as an individual. Hopefully there's life after him.

How do you view Manchester United's Champions League group?
What's interesting is that usually in your group the fourth team is your banker to get six points by winning both home and away but this time that is not going to be the case with Wolfsburg. I've seen them a few times over the last year and they have a lot of quality. Also, CSKA Moscow play on artificial grass so it will be a tricky game over there.

Marco Van Basten has praised your leadership and organisational abilities. Do you think you can go on improving your game over the years?
I don't think, by this stage, that I am getting any better but I have reached a certain level and maintain it quite well with the help of all the team. The players around me at United are all great. It's important for a goalkeeper to have a good defence – that's how we went so many games without conceding a goal. It was a team effort. I feel fine and happy and honoured to receive an award like this [ESM award]. It's nice to be recognised.

You insist you have retired from international football, but would you consider playing for Holland again at the World Cup next year?
It seems to have become a national topic, but my main focus right now is on recovering from the injury [he broke his hand in a pre-season friendly] and to play well for United again and then see what happens. I've been able to maintain my fitness levels. I have spent a month on the training bike and you can work on kicking and running. Now I've started working on exercising my fingers, grabbing a foam ball and so on.

It's been reported that you would retire at the end of this season. Is this true?
That's the first I've heard of it! First I have to come back from my injury and see how it does. Then I will sit down with United and see how I'm feeling and what they want. I try to make sure I maintain my fitness, eat the right things – a glass of wine occasionally. I've been quite lucky. Also, nowadays, the general preparation is better and more detailed. You are more closely monitored so maybe if there's a problem it can be picked up sooner than it used to be.

Which strikers do you respect the most?
I've had that question loads of times and it's always difficult to answer because I always prepare as well as possible, no matter who we are playing against. The Brazilian Ronaldo has scored goals against me and so have people like Hernan Crespo and Filippo Inzaghi. But they are all different kinds of players – like Didier Drogba and Fernando Torres are also different in their own ways. So it's not really any one man.

Do you undertake special homework on penalty takers?
I have conceded more penalties than I have saved so I have no special secret or I would have stopped the kicks more often. I try to get as much information as I can but then sometimes it's also about how a player lines up to take a shot, whether he is left-footed or right-footed. You make a choice...and hope he shoots for the corner to which you're going.

Which other goalkeeper do you appreciate?
Probably Iker Casillas. He is still young but he has won so many things already: a couple of Champions Leagues and Spanish league titles. He is also captain of Spain. I can admire that.

You have worked under some outstanding personalities: Louis Van Gaal, Marco Van Basten and, of course, Alex Ferguson. What is Ferguson's secret of success?
I think Sir Alex knows the right moment to change a team, to get the new players he wants and needs. It's his desire, his hunger. It's not a matter of charisma. You don't work with charisma on the training pitch. In football you have to have a desire to work and win things – and that is what he has in a very special way.

And the long-term future?
My idea has always been to concentrate fully on my performance on the pitch and then I will see what other opportunities come later. But at the moment my career is all about my goalkeeping. For the future – well, goalkeeping has been such a great part of my life it might make sense to stay there. Being a goalkeeper coach would be an easy solution but that's not a decision for now.

Interview by Keir Radnedge

Dani Alves

Barcelona's rampaging right-back on playing for club and country

The *Selecao* have to be respected

NOT LONG after you moved to La Liga, and before you were called up by Brazil, there was talk of your possible naturalisation and you playing for Spain. Did you ever consider it?
I actually decided to take a break at that stage in my life. I was very young and it was not the time to make such a decision. I had to fight for my objectives: namely to make it to the *Selecao* and pull on this jersey which is so coveted by everyone. I wanted to wait and see what my possibilities in the *Selecao* were and then make a decision. Thank God I got called up for Brazil and saw my wish come true. I think that if I'd failed it would have been very difficult for me as I had always told my relatives and friends that I would not have been a footballer unless I had made it into the *Selecao*. I am very happy to have made this dream come true – and also to be going to the World Cup finals.

After the 2006 World Cup and Cafu's retirement, the right-back position was up for grabs, yet still nobody has completely nailed it. Who are your main opponents for the berth?
We have great players for the right-back position, just like we do all over the pitch. I know I have to always be at my best to keep getting called up. And I'm always aware that many others could easily take my place – such as Maicon, Leonardo Moura and Cicinho. I always believe it's a privilege whenever I get called up because I know how many others would like to be there.

You've always said Cafu is your idol and he named you as his successor for the No2 shirt after he retired.
I've been following Cafu ever since I was young, ever since his time at Sao Paulo. He was my role model, all the more so because we play in the same position. Today, I'm proud and pleased to say that he remains my idol for all he represented on and off the pitch. He is a player who left his mark. Hearing him say that I would be his successor was a very emotional moment because he was very important for the *Selecao*. It is a source of pride for me to be complimented by a person like him. I hope that, eventually, he is proven to be right. If I manage to achieve half what Cafu has done in football it will have been good enough.

> **If I manage to achieve half of what Cafu has it will have been good enough**

You had a stint in midfield in the Copa America Final against Argentina in 2007 and scored your first goal for *Selecao*.
I actually played as a midfielder on a few occasions for my previous club, Sevilla, in my first two years in Spain, and I used to play in midfield all the time when I was younger, so I know the position well and felt no problems. You have to be there to help the team and face any challenge. I was happy to score and help Brazil win the Copa America title, all the more so as people regarded Argentina as the favourites and said they would coast it against Brazil. They did not show enough respect to the players who were representing the *Selecao*. Whenever the *Selecao* are on the pitch they have to be respected.

Can Barca repeat last season's success?
We need to keep ambitions high. Every club in Spain and Europe will be dying to take our trophies. It will be a tough season, for sure.

What about Real Madrid's phenomenal spending?
They have brought in a lot of reinforcements to try to overtake us. I guess it was more urgent for them because they haven't won anything in a while! Mind you, it will be great for the league to have Cristiano Ronaldo and Kaka around.

Is there anything Barcelona have got that Real Madrid haven't?
Yes, they don't have a group. Stars alone won't be enough for them to win titles. You need to gel, which can't be built overnight. We have also got some amazing players and they are much more comfortable around each other.

Interview by Joao Drigues and Fernando Duarte

Theo Walcott

Arsenal's England winger aims to thrive on the biggest stage

World Cup is my priority

WHAT IS your primary target this season: success with Arsenal or at the World Cup?
The World Cup has to be the main one. If you win the World Cup you achieve the ultimate in the game and I think we have a chance. I would love to win a trophy with Arsenal this season, but the World Cup is the big one this year. Hopefully the Arsenal fans won't kill me for saying that!

You were a surprise member of the England squad at the last World Cup in 2006. Was that good for your career at the time?
It meant there was a lot of pressure on me from a very early age. I was thrust into a World Cup squad at the age of 17 and my name was out there straight away, before I had even played a game in the Premier League. That wasn't so easy to deal with because most 17-year-old kids learn the game and grow up away from the cameras and avoid the same spotlight I had to deal with. I had to miss those first few years out and try to step up to the adult level straightaway. It has been a bit different for me, but it has been an interesting journey so far.

So could you have done without all the attention?
The 2006 World Cup and all that went with it was an experience. I'm glad to have had it as it was good for me in many respects. I trained with some of the best players in the world and experienced a major championship at a very young age. My friends and family would confirm I'm the same person I was before I went to the World Cup and hopefully I will never change. The strange thing is that people think I have been around for a long time, but I'm still very young and learning the game all the time.

How do you assess the impact Fabio Capello has made as England boss?
Mr Capello has done a great job. He is such an experienced coach and all the players have total respect for him. We have been on a great run of results in the qualifiers and the confidence is higher than ever in the camp. Working with someone like Mr Capello is a great experience for all of us.

What has the Italian coach brought to the England squad?
I feel we are united as a team now. Also, we have become much more consistent, which is a quality that all top teams need. We showed in the two games against Croatia that we can play some very good football and score great goals on our day, but we are not getting carried away. Qualifying for the World Cup finals is only the start of what we want to do this year.

> **England are united as a team now, we have become much more consistent**

Your hat-trick against Croatia in Zagreb was a key to England's qualification. How do you reflect on that performance?
The game is gone from my memory, to be honest. There is no point looking back because the future is what matters now and I cannot worry too much about what has gone. I have got the hat-trick ball at home, but you have to move on.

In what areas do you think Arsenal need to improve?
The Arsenal fans have been very patient over the last few seasons as we have been building without bringing any trophies to the club. Now we have to reflect of what we have done and learn from the mistakes by converting it into something more. Our biggest disappointment last season was in the Champions League. We did well to get to the semi-finals, but came up short against Manchester United and probably needed to show a bit more of a cutting in the final third of that game. We also have to grind out results when required, which has not always been our best quality.

Do you feel under pressure to justify the faith Arsene Wenger has put in you?
Arsene Wenger has put so much faith in all of us at Arsenal. He takes all the criticism on himself if the team do not perform and we all appreciate how lucky we are to be working with such a great manager.

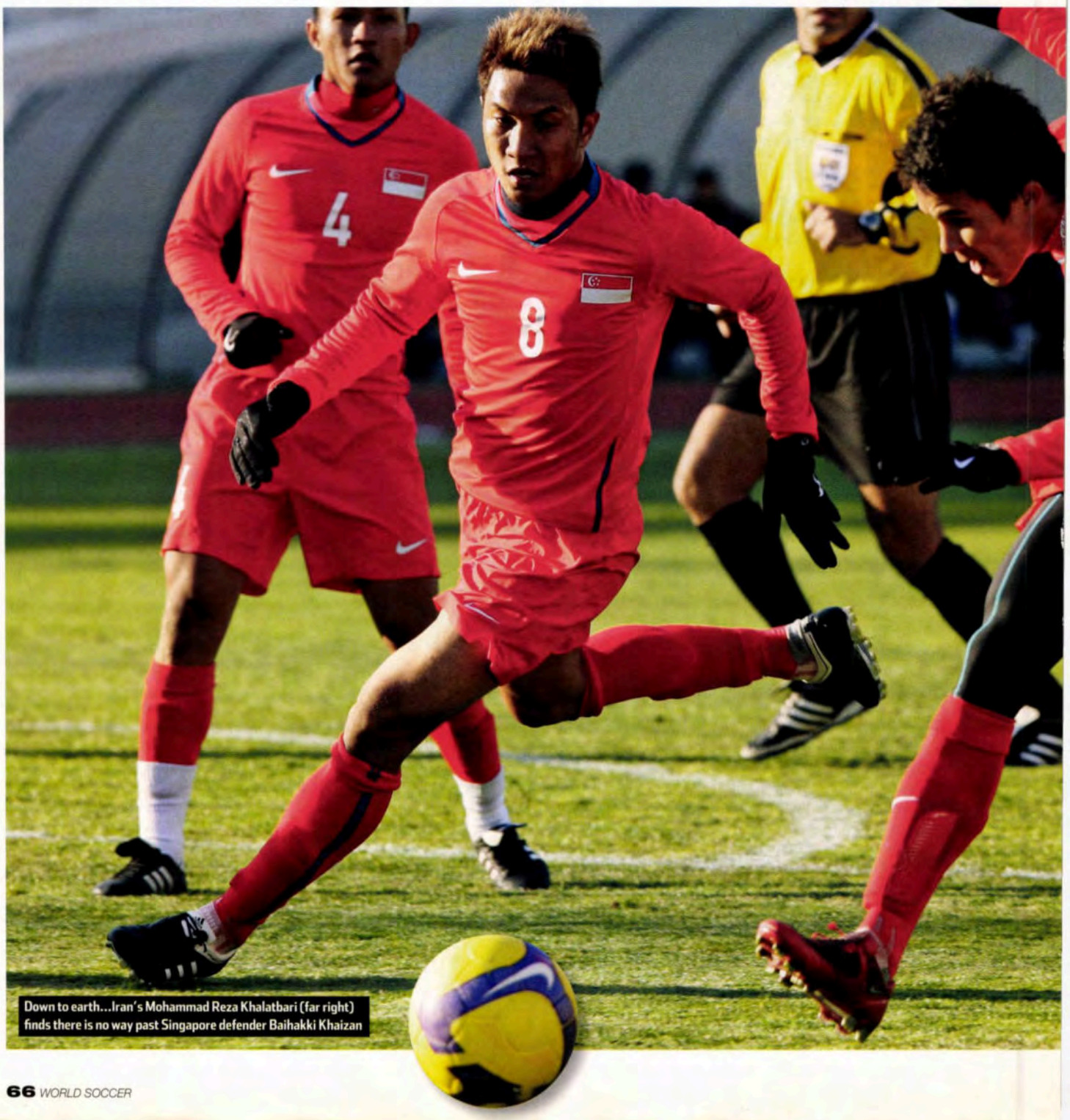
Arsenal's squad looks weaker than last season after the summer sales, so how can you be so confident?
We suffered with a lot of long-term injury problems last season and it affected us badly. If we avoid a repeat of that problem this season then we can do well. When you consider we were without a top-class player like Cesc Fabregas for a big chunk of last season, it's easy to see why I believe we can go on to the next level this season.

Interview by Bob Gibson

● *Theo Walcott was speaking at a fund-raising event for Great Ormond Street Hospital (www.beagoonerbeagiver.org)*

SINGAPORE The country in depth – the state of the game, club-by-club guide, movers and shakers

Onwards and



Down to earth...Iran's Mohammad Reza Khalatbari (far right) finds there is no way past Singapore defender Baihakki Khaizan

MICHAEL CHURCH

upwards

The minnows of Southeast Asia continue to strive for bigger and better things

PUNCHING ABOVE ITS weight is nothing new for Singapore, a nation of less than five million people surrounded by countries with greater populations and infinitely more resources.

Since declaring independence from Malaysia in 1965, the tiny island state – Singapore is the smallest nation in Southeast Asia and covers an area of less than 275 square miles – has belied its stature to become one of Asia's enduring economic success stories.

Now those same lessons are being applied to football.

Passion for the game is a given in a land that for years frantically followed the exploits of its own team against the state sides of neighbouring Malaysia.

Talk to fans of a certain age and their eyes light up at recollections of away days in Pahang and Perak, and of road trips to watch their beloved Lions take on their bitter rivals on the other side of the causeway which links the island with peninsular Malaysia.

Both before and after independence, Singapore has always had close footballing links with the Malaysians, notching up 24 wins in the prestigious Malaysia Cup – the longest-running competition in Asian football – between 1921 and 1994.

Many of those victories – including their success in the inaugural year of the tournament – came against perennial rivals Selangor and those of a nostalgic persuasion still pine for the evenings when the "Kallang Roar" from the 55,000-capacity crowd at the National Stadium would push the team towards victory.

Those days, though, are long gone. A dispute between the football associations of Singapore and Malaysia led to the Lions withdrawing from the tournament, although not before they claimed a Malaysian league-and-cup double as a final hurrah in 1994.

But, for many, the heart of Singaporean football had been torn out. After a fallow year in 1995, the S.League – heavily modelled on Japan's J.League and given significant government backing – came into existence amid moderate fanfare.

Geylang United, home to a number of the stars who had helped Singapore to that Malaysia double, claimed the first title but, after the initial highs, interest began to wane. With the national team also struggling to make an impact, football

Trophy time...Singapore celebrate their first major title: the 1998 Tiger Cup

in Singapore looked, at best, to be treading water.

The genesis of a turnaround came in 1998 when, against the odds, Singapore claimed their first-ever international title, lifting the Tiger Cup – now known as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Championship – with a 1-0 win over hosts Vietnam in the Final in Hanoi.

A somewhat fortuitous goal from defender R Sasikumar earned Barry Whitbread and his team victory in front of 40,000 bewildered home fans and kick-started a change in attitude towards the game back home.

In the post-Malaysian Cup years, football in Singapore had looked set to stagnate. The glitz and glamour of the English Premier League – which is followed to the point of obsession – filled the void, while parents (particularly of the Chinese majority) were reluctant to push their children towards playing the game as there was little hope of ever making a living from football. As a result, the talent pool into which the national selectors were dipping their hands was whittled down to little more than a third of population.

However, following the Tiger Cup triumph the Football Association of Singapore implemented a plan called "Goal 2010" in which the country set its sights on trying to qualify for the World Cup finals.

Net gain...Jordan keeper Amer Shafi Sabbah can't stop Casmir (out of picture) putting Singapore ahead in an Asian Cup qualifier

Ultimately the plan was to fail, but it did lay the foundations for a change in fortunes that saw Singapore become one of the dominant nations within the region.

A national football academy was started in 2000; two years later, overseas-born players were given Singaporean citizenship for the first time, allowing them to play for the national team. England-born defender Daniel Bennett, who had spent much of his childhood in Singapore, as well as Croatia-born striker Mirko Grabovac and Brazil-born forward Egmar Goncalves were among the first to benefit.

But, though the moved paid off, it proved to be controversial and still prompts criticism, with former Singapore international Malek Awab recently telling *The Straits Times*: "Look at Shahril Ishak. He's the finest midfielder now – but, because of the

Start the party...Singapore celebrate a goal against Indonesia in the Suzuki Cup in Jakarta last year

Bridge of highs...local fans greet Liverpool as the tourists take a river trip before their friendly against the national team

foreign-born players, he has to sit on the bench."

His comments ring true for many Singaporeans – not to mention the coaches of other national teams around the region.

Backbone of the team

Of the current Singapore squad, seven were born outside the country and, for all the attempts to highlight the fact that the remainder of the players were born on the island, it is this group – Bennett, Agu Casmir, Precious Emuejeraye, Shi Jiayi, Fahrudin Mustafic, Aleksandar Duric and John Wilkinson – that form the backbone of the starting line-up.

And there is no denying Singapore have established themselves as one of the powerhouses of the Southeast Asian game. Under current national coach Raddy Avramovic, they claimed a second regional title by beating Indonesia in the Final of the 2004 Tiger Cup, and then successfully defended the re-named trophy with a two-legged win over Thailand in 2007.

As a result, the national team are now able to compete with nations who have many times their resources.

The S.League has also sought to play a role in improving the game, albeit with mixed results.

Attendance figures for domestic matches continue to be meagre, while three of the eight clubs from the league's inaugural season either no longer exist or have merged. To take up the slack, clubs from outside Singapore have been encouraged to join the league.

Chinese side Sinchi were the first to sign up, in 2003, followed by the satellite club of Japan's Albirex Niigata a year later. Although Sinchi lasted just three seasons, Albirex have become a fixture in the league.

Others have fared even worse, with China's Liaoning Guangyuan expelled due to their involvement in a match-fixing scandal and Sporting Afrique, a team featuring players from across Africa, lasting only one season after doubts were raised about the conditions endured by players connected with the club.

The country's leading club side are undoubtedly Singapore Armed Forces, who have won the domestic title seven times – including the last three in a row – and the military team are now looking to broaden their horizons after this year becoming the first Singaporean team to reach the group stage of the Asian Champions League.

Although SAF failed to progress any further, and the national side didn't manage to retain their regional title at the end of last year, at least Singaporean football fans once again have something to shout about...even if it isn't quite the roar of old. ●

"Clubs from outside were encouraged to join the league"

Discuss this at worldsoccer.com/forums

SINGAPORE

Home United, SAF, Tampines Rovers...a guide to the top-division clubs

1 ALBIREX NIIGATA (SINGAPORE)
Joined the S.League in 2004 as the organisers sought to increase the number of overseas-affiliated clubs participating. A satellite team of the Japanese league side, they finished fifth in their debut season and have remained a fixture in mid-table ever since.

2 BALESTIER KHALSA
Originally founded in 1898 as Fathul Karib, the club came together in its current guise in 2002 when Balestier Central and Clementi Khalsa merged (Fathul Karib having changed their name to Balestier United in 1975, before becoming Balestier Central with the formation of the S.League). Finished bottom of the table last season.

3 BRUNEI DPMM
Owned by the crown prince of Brunei, they joined the S.League this season and became the first club in the competition's history to play their home matches outside the island state. Previously in the Malaysian league, they won the Brunei Premier League in 2002 and 2004. Won the Singapore League Cup in June to become the first foreign team to lift the trophy.

4 GEYLANG UNITED
Winners of the inaugural S.League title back in 1996 – thanks to the efforts of national golden boy Fandi Ahmad and Iranian imports Mohammad Khakpour, Hamid Estili and coach Jalal Talebi – they have struggled to hit the heights in recent seasons and have not won the title since 2001, when they claimed their second crown. Currently coached by former national team defender Lim Tong-hai, who was a member of the Singapore team that won the Malaysian league-and-cup double in 1994 and also featured in Geylang's 1996 S.League-winning side.

5 GOMBAK UNITED
Winners of the Singapore League Cup in 2008, they have a chequered history within the S.League. Although the club joined the league two years after its formation, they withdrew in 2003, due to financial concerns, only to return in 2006. The time away worked in their favour as they are now regulars in the top half of the table.

6 HOME UNITED
Known as "The Protectors", they are backed by the country's police force, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the civil defence force. Finished last in the league's inaugural season back in 1996, but since then have gone on to win the title twice (in 1999 and 2003), as well as reaching the quarter-finals of the AFC Cup in 2004 under former coach Steve Darby, who is currently Thailand's caretaker coach. They have also won the Singapore Cup on four occasions.

7 SENGKANG PUNGGOL
Formed in 2006 when two former S.League clubs – Sengkang Marine and Paya Lebar Punggol – merged, they have struggled in their first three seasons, finishing 11th on each occasion, though hopes were high of a significant improvement this year with the hiring of coach Jorg Steinebrunner. However, he and chairman Ben Lim have both since left under a cloud, with former Singapore international Aide Iskandar taking the helm.

8 SINGAPORE ARMED FORCES
The military team is the most successful in the history of the S.League, claiming their first domestic title in 1997 and then going on to win six more. They also became the first Singaporean club to qualify for the group phase of the Asian Champions League when they beat Provincial Electricity Authority of Thailand and PSMS Medan from Indonesia in the preliminary phase of the competition this year. However, they struggled when they came up against Kashima Antlers, Suwon Bluewings and Shanghai Shenhua in the next stage, earning a solitary point as they went out. Their domestic form, though, remained unhampered and SAF look set to claim a fourth straight league title under coach Richard Bok.

9 SUPER REDS
Backed by Singapore's Korean expatriate population and boasting a squad entirely made up Korean players, they joined the league in 2007. After struggling and finishing last in their first season, the club made impressive strides in 2008 to finish second behind Singapore Armed Forces.

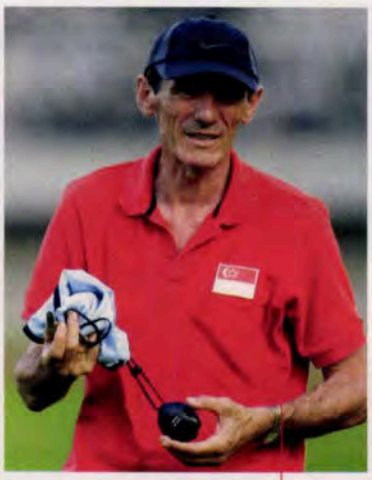
10 TAMPINES ROVERS
Twice S.League champions – they won back-to-back titles in 2004 and 2005 – they were the first club side to taste regional success when they won the ASEAN Club Championship in 2005, defeating Pahang of Malaysia in the Final of the Southeast Asian competition. They have not won the title since 2005, but remain one of the country's leading clubs.

11 WOODLANDS WELLINGTON
The League Cup win in 2007 was a first success since their involvement in the S-League in the inaugural season. Were runners-up in the first stage of that initial campaign but since then have never finished higher than third. They were Singapore Cup runners-up in 2005 and 2008.

12 YOUNG LIONS
The Football Association of Singapore entered the nation's Under-23 squad in the S.League for the first time in 2003, with the team set up not only as a breeding ground for the country's best young talent but also for promising overseas players with a view to them taking on Singaporean citizenship. The team finished bottom in their first season, but have since become more competitive and are coached by former national team defender Terry Pathmanathan.

The movers and shakers in SINGAPOREAN FOOTBALL

INDRA SAHDAN DAUD
Current captain of the national team, he was a member of the Singapore squads that won the Southeast Asian title in 2004 and 2007. The striker, who has scored more than 50 times for the national team, looked set for a move abroad at the end of last year – with interest from Real Salt Lake in the US as well as clubs in Australia and Vietnam – before he signed a contract with Sengkang Punggol.



RADOJKO AVRAMOVIC
Serbian coach who took control of the national team in 2003 and has overseen a major improvement in its fortunes. Hired partly due to his success in developing young talent with Kuwait – who he led to the finals of the Olympic football tournament in 2000 – and Oman, he has been the catalyst that has sparked Singapore's move to the top of the regional game. Has twice led Singapore to the ASEAN Championship.

DOUGLAS MOORE
The England-born New Zealander earned himself a place in Singapore football's history books by guiding the team representing the island state to the Malaysian league-and-cup double in 1994. When the Singaporeans ended their participation in Malaysian football, they turned to him when they set up the S.League and, as the first season kicked off in 1996, he was the league's inaugural chief executive officer. However, the coaching bug soon returned and he took over at Geylang United in 1998 before moving to work in the United States, where he is currently head coach of Lock Haven University in Pennsylvania.

FANDI AHMAD
Despite retiring more than a decade ago, the golden boy of Singaporean football remains the man against whom everyone else in the domestic game is measured. He became the first player from Southeast Asia to play regularly in Europe, joining Groningen in Holland in 1983 after an earlier trial with Ajax, and famously scored against Internazionale in the UEFA Cup. He also played in Indonesia before returning home and leading Singapore to the Malaysian league-and-cup double in 1994. He was captain of Geylang United's inaugural S.League-winning side in 1996 and also won the title with Singapore Armed Forces the following year. He coached SAF to the championship in 2000, has also worked with the national team and is currently in charge of Indonesia club Pelita Jaya.

DANIEL BENNETT
Although born in England, the defender moved to Singapore with his parents at the age of two and, in 2002, became one of the first players to acquire citizenship to play for the national team. The 31-year-old is one of only a handful of Singapore national team players to have experience playing outside the island state, having served two spells with Wrexham (in 2001 and 2003). He is currently in his third stint with Singapore Armed Forces, rejoining in 2007 after a season with Woodlands Wellington.

RICHARD BOK
With three leagues titles in a row to his name, the Singapore Armed Forces boss is the most successful coach in the history of the S.League. A former player with SAF, he suffered a stroke as a 39-year-old in 1997 which ended his playing career. Took up coaching and, after seven years as an assistant, was handed the job of head coach in May 2006, leading the club to the title that year – and every season since.

R SASIKUMAR
Scored one of the most famous goals in the history of Singaporean football as the national team defeated Vietnam in the Final of the 1998 Tiger Cup. His goal earned Singapore a first-ever regional title and became known as "The Shoulder of God" after the ball went in off his back. Now runs a sports marketing and consultancy firm.

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

● The S.League comprises 12 teams, who play each other thee times over the course of the season. There is no promotion or relegation at the end of the campaign, though all teams must gain approval from the Football Association of Singapore to compete the following term. The league winners qualify for the following year's Asian Champions League, but only if they are a Singaporean club – making Albirex Niigata (Singapore), Brunei DPMM, Super Reds and the FA's Under-23 side, Young Lions, ineligible.

● There are two cup competitions. The Singapore Cup involves the 12 S.League clubs, plus four invited overseas clubs, with the winners qualifying for the AFC Cup (but, again, only if they are a Singaporean club), while the Singapore League Cup is just for the 12 S.League clubs.

Strike...SAF's Ahmad Latiff (7) celebrates scoring against Shanghai Shenhua in this year's Asian Champions League

ENGLAND

Jack WILSHERE

Arsenal teen on fast track to senior England side

THEY CERTAINLY know how to wean sporting excellence in the Hertfordshire town of Stevenage, 30 miles north of London. Quite incredibly for a conurbation of just 79,000 souls, it is the birthplace of not only reigning Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton and top golfer Ian Poulter, but also a pair of England's finest footballing prospects: Aston Villa attacker Ashley Young and Arsenal's Jack Wilshere, the brilliant teenage midfielder who seems on the cusp of a memorable career.

Too much media attention and hysteria can derail even the most level-headed young player. But it is truly hard to not to praise 17-year-old Wilshere to the heavens. Whether starring for the Gunners' FA Youth Cup winners last season or in his rationed first-team appearances – Arsene Wenger has mainly restricted him to League Cup and friendly action – the extravagantly gifted left-footer invariably leaves the observer mesmerised by his multicoloured palette of skills, exuberance and fearlessness. The kid is a natural.

Equally at home in the hole behind the strikers or out wide, Wilshere is at his most potent running with the ball. Small and rather slight, he is perfectly balanced and easily able to accelerate away when defenders close in. He punches holes in a rearguard with the swagger of a matador teasing the bull.

Some believe Wilshere in full stride harks back to Paul Gascoigne at the height of his powers; others argue he is worth more than Gazza reincarnated. Some even say there is more than a hint of Diego Maradona about him and comparisons do not come any more flattering than this.

Since his eye-catching Emirates Cup performances this summer against Atletico Madrid and Rangers, many in the UK media are pushing his claims for a pace in England's squad for next year's World Cup finals.

Wenger has likened his steely self-confidence to that of Wayne Rooney when he first exploded on to the scene and England manager Fabio Capello, not normally one to dish up second helpings of approbation, clearly likes what he sees and has said: "It's not normal to be so young and so good."

Yet for all his undoubted talent, talk of World Cups has to be premature. Up until this season Wilshere had clocked up just six minutes of action in the English top flight, appearing as a late substitute at Blackburn in September 2008 to become, at 16 years and 256 days, Arsenal's youngest debutant.

Obviously he still has much to learn and the likelihood is that Wenger will continue to use him in short, sharp bursts. Careful nurturing has to be the order of the day.

The emergence of Wilshere is a highly significant moment for Arsenal. At the club's academy since the age of nine, he is not just proof positive that their youth system works, he also serves as the counter-argument to those who believe Wenger is only interested in ability from overseas. In Wilshere, Rhys Murphy, Kieran Gibbs, Sanchez Watt, Emmanuel Frimpong and others, Arsenal's rising generation has a strong Anglo flavour and that has to be a positive for the club – and England.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Arsenal
Country England
Born January 1, 1992, in Stevenage
Honours none

Romelu LUKAKU

Anderlecht starlet following in his father's footsteps

BELGIUM

THERE WAS LITTLE for Anderlecht to cheer about after a 8-2 aggregate loss to Lyon in August's Champions League qualifier. So hats off to 16-year-old striker Romelu Lukaku for bringing the smiles back to the Brussels club.

After goals galore in schoolboy and junior football - 250 in 150 games for Lierse, FC Brussels and then Anderlecht, who he joined at the age of 13 - Lukaku made his first-team debut in May as a substitute in the Belgian league title play-off with Standard Liege and has not lost any momentum this term, becoming increasingly central to coach Ariel Jacobs' plans and scoring his first senior goal in a 2-0 win at Zulte Waregem.

Lukaku - whose father, Roger, played up front for the Democratic Republic of Congo and Belgian clubs Seraing, Germinal Ekeren and Mechelen - has all the talent to merit his "Black Pearl" nickname. Quick and powerful, he shields the ball well, is a born predator and has a kick like a mule in both feet.

Lukaku comes across as an eminently sensible and grounded young man and the signs are he will avoid a similar fate to that of Nii Lamptey, who went from teenage Ghanaian superstar at Anderlecht in the early 1990s to burn-out reject.

"As I play in the first team, some people treat me like a king," he says. "They are wrong to do so. I haven't changed and with my dad to advise me I should be in a good position to progress."

Despite his club and Belgium youth and Under-21 commitments, he continues to study diligently at high school, where he hopes to stay for another two years at least. It says much for his character and sense of loyalty that he has turned down a number of lucrative offers from major European clubs, preferring to sign his first pro contract with Anderlecht.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Anderlecht
Country Belgium
Born May 13, 1993, in Antwerp

CHILE

Jean BEAUSEJOUR

Wide man finally gaining international recognition

IT MIGHT HAVE taken Jean Beausejour more than four years to score his first goal for Chile but it was worth the wait. His strike against Bolivia in June was a big step on the march towards South Africa under Argentinian coach Marcelo Bielsa.

Quick, strong and left-footed, Beausejour, who plays his club football in Mexico with America, came through the ranks at Universidad Catolica in his home city of Santiago. The son of a Chilean mother and Haitian father, he was an Under-23 hit in the Olympic qualifiers in2004. He was then drafted into the seniors but soon discarded.

Perhaps the problem lay in his premature move abroad. He played in Switzerland, Brazil and Belgium without leaving much of a trace. By 2007 he was back in Chile with Cobreloa but next year, having joined O'Higgins of Rancagua, he was given an international recall. At first he was used on the wing in Bielsa's 3-3-1-3 formation but the breakthrough came last October when, against Argentina, he was switched to left midfield and encouraged to run from deep.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Club America (Mex)
Country Chile
Born June 1, 1984, in Santiago
Previous clubs Universidad Catolica, Universidad de Concepcion (loan), Servette (Swi), Gremio (Bra), Gent (Bel), Cobreloa, O'Higgins
International debut February 2004 v Mexico
International caps 21 (1 goal)

Dani PAREJO

Under-20 star set to kick-start his career at Getafe

SPAIN

THERE WAS AN empty seat at the Alfredo Di Stefano stadium as the 2008-09 season started in Spain's Second Division B. But it was not just any old empty seat. North east of Madrid, in the new development of Valdebebas near the city's Barajas airport, the stadium belongs to Real Madrid's youth team and the seat belonged to Di Stefano himself.

Madrid's honorary president, the greatest player in their history and coach on two occasions, refused to return to the stadium bearing his name because Madrid had allowed a player to leave the club.

Not Ronaldo or Zidane, not Beckham or Figo, not Roberto Carlos. It was Daniel Parejo Munoz, a kid Di Stefano declared the most talented he had ever seen. Coming from a man many Spaniards consider the greatest of all time, that is quite a statement. But early signs are that Dani Parejo is going to be some player.

Odd, then, that his destination at the start of last season should be England's Championship and Queens Park Rangers. Odd that he should leave Loftus Road after 14 games having not made much of an impact. Odd that he should return to Spain halfway through the season to sit on the bench, make just three appearances and be sold at the end of the season.

Yet it can all be easily explained. Parejo's move to QPR was facilitated by the relationship between Madrid and Alejandro Agag, part of the Flavio Briatore group that took over at the West London club, and was designed to give the player some experience. He then returned to Madrid as a political move for under-fire president Ramon Calderon, who was ousted within a couple of months.

Finally, his sale to Getafe this summer – which was propelled by an understandable lack of chances at a club that now boasts Cristiano Ronaldo, Kaka, Gonzalo Higuain, Raul and Guti for the *media punta* (attacking midfield) positions – is seen as the final stage in his apprenticeship.

At just 20, time is on Parejo's side and Real Madrid have included a buy-back clause in his contract.

Born in Coslada, Madrid, he joined the club at 14. With his curly hair, goofy smile and rolling eyes, you could be forgiven for likening him to Ronaldinho. With his talent, you could too. There is little of the explosiveness, but, in an advanced midfield role or just behind the strikers, he does have something of the vision and creativity of the Brazilian about him.

He scored 10 times for Real Madrid Castilla in 2007-08, the fulcrum of a Real second string that finished a creditable fifth. He also scored the winner as Spain clinched the 2007 European Under-19 crown.

A Spain Under-20 regular, Parejo has a neat touch and an eye for a clever pass – maybe too clever. At QPR there was a nagging feeling he was simply on a different wavelength to his team-mates.

The move to Getafe looks likely to reap greater rewards. Since promotion in 2004, the club have been characterised by their employment of young, ambitious coaches trying to cut their teeth in the top flight with a commitment to neat, passing football. They have also tended to opt for young players, often on loan from bigger clubs.

Getafe have become the perfect ecosystem for the up and coming. It is no surprise Raul Albiol really got noticed on loan there, before returning to Valencia then joining Real Madrid this summer. Or that Ruben De la Red and Esteban Granero, both Real products, went on loan to Getafe, were given chances denied to them at home and came back better players. The pattern is unlikely to change. Getafe's new boss is former Real winger Michel, who was Parejo's youth team coach at Madrid.

"The style here really suits me," says Parejo. "Everyone at Getafe is united by a desire to do things the right way and to grow as footballers.

"If I had to leave Madrid, coming here was the best decision I could possibly have made."

If Getafe can do for Parejo what they did for those before him, and he can bring out his undoubted talent, there's no reason why Di Stefano should not be watching him in a white shirt again very soon.

Sid Lowe

FACT FILE

Club Getafe
Country Spain
Born April 16, 1989, in Madrid
Previous clubs Real Madrid, QPR (Eng, loan)
Honours European Under-19 Championship

FRANCE

FIVE TO FOLLOW: LIGUE 1 STARLETS

Promising youngsters in the French top flight

MONACO

Mathieu COUTADEUR

The all-action midfield enforcer was widely tipped to leave Le Mans this summer for one of several important adresses: Arsenal, French champions Bordeaux or Hoffenheim in the Bundesliga. Yet, inexplicably, all three would-be buyers put their interest on the back burner and he opted instead to join Monaco for £3.6million. Good business on the part of the Monegasques. Not only does the 20-year-old offer bite in the tackle and limitless stamina, an ability to pass the ball with Barcelona-like crispness and foresight makes him a special one indeed.

SAINT-ETIENNE

Blaise MATUIDI

Another defensive midfielder who passes the Arsene Wenger qualitative test, the 22-year-old says he models his style on Claude Makelele and the pair have much in common: diminutive stature, excellent positional play, tenacious ball-winning and thoughtful, accurate distribution. If Matuidi suffers from one drawback it is that he is somewhat injury prone. A graduate of the renowned French national academy at Clairefontaine, he started his professional odyssey at Troyes before heading to Saint-Etienne in 2007.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

Mamadou SAKHO

A granite-hewn 19-year-old centre-back or left-back who new PSG coach Antoine Kombouare rightly sees as one of the leaders of his reconfigured team. Precocious is the only way to describe the Parisian who made his pro debut the day after his 17th birthday in a UEFA Cup tie against AEK Athens and went on to skipper the side within a few months. He is vice-captain of France Under-21s and the word is a first senior cap is not far away.

TOULOUSE

Moussa SISSOKO

Off the field, the 20-year-old is the shy, retiring sort – so much so that when interviewed he is barely audible. But what a transformation when he sets foot on the green rectangle. The whistle goes and the Paris-born midfielder turns into the caped crusader, bristling with raw power, athleticism, explosiveness and no little skill either. With Toulouse since the age of 14, he joined them by accident after going to support a friend at a talent day organised by the club and ending up on the pitch to make up the numbers. His call-up to the France squad for a recent World Cup qualifier in the Faroes was entirely merited.

BORDEAUX

Benoit TREMOULANIS

An outstanding home-grown left-back who was one of the unsung heroes of his club's title-winning campaign last season, the 23-year-old saw off the challenge of the more experienced Diego Placente and Franck Jurietti to establish himself in Laurent Blanc's starting line-up. Small and dynamic, he is often mentioned in the same breath as former France and Bordeaux full-back Bixente Lizarazu and, like the latter, he is a master of the overlap, scurrying forward to supply inviting crosses.

At home with the

The Spanish capital is in a league of its own when it comes to the game's biggest names, reports Peterjon Cresswell

FOR FOOTBALLING pedigree, nowhere matches Madrid. The likes of Alfredo Di Stefano, Ferenc Puskas and Zinedine Zidane have all worn the famous white of Real Madrid; a kit that is graced today by such royalty of the game as Cristiano Ronaldo and Kaka.

Although the nine-times European champions are not the Spanish capital's only club – the city is also home to past European Cup finalists Atletico Madrid, and Getafe and Rayo Vallecano, who are both former UEFA Cup quarter-finalists – they do dominate proceedings.

The contrast between Real and their biggest neighbours, Atletico, could not be more stark. While Real's Santiago Bernabeu stadium is surrounded by classy, grand facades and powerful banking organisations, Atletico are based next to a brewery in the working-class south of the city. And though *El Derbi Madrileno* may be the highlight of the season for all Atleti fans, the only game that really matters for Real supporters is *El Clasico* with Barcelona.

Real and Atletico both have their roots in the early 1900s. Real arrived via Football Club Sky, New Foot-Ball de Madrid, Club Espanol de Madrid and, eventually, Madrid FC, before becoming Real (meaning "royal") by decree in 1920. Dissident members of Madrid FC helped form Atletico, but the two clubs did not meet until 1929, in the inaugural Spanish league.

Real originally played their home games at the Estadio Chamartin and soon established themselves in the burgeoning Spanish game. However, it was the arrival of Santiago Bernabeu as president in 1945 that was to transform the club. His political connections with Spanish dictator Franco eased the way for him to build a new stadium (which would eventually be renamed after him) and – just like his successor, Florentino Perez, today – he embarked on a strategy of signing world-class players from around the world.

The driving force

Acting on an idea first suggested by the French sports paper *L'Equipe*, Bernabeu was also the driving force behind the creation of the European Cup. Boasting a team that contained Di Stefano, Hector Rial and Francisco Gento, Real came from behind to beat Stade de Reims 4-3 in the Final of the first competition in 1956. And after adding such stars as Raymond Kopa, Jose Santamaria and, most significantly, Ferenc Puskas, they then went on to win a record five straight European Cups, including the landmark 7-3 victory over Eintracht Frankfurt in the 1960 Final.

Atletico, who won two successive Spanish league titles in 1950 and 1951 under Helenio Herrera, also made their mark in Europe, winning the Cup-winners Cup in 1962. Like Bernabeu at Real, Atletico president Vicente Calderon played a major part in his club's success and, again like Bernabeu, today's home stadium now bears his name.

Real collected a sixth European Cup in 1966, while the likes of Emilio Butragueno and Michel were behind their five straight Spanish titles in the 1980s.

Foreign coaches, most notably ruthless Argentinian boss Juan Carlos Lorenzo, kept Atletico in the running and they came within a

galacticos

Centre stage...Raul leads out Sergio Ramos, Iker Casillas and the Real Madrid squad for the derby against Atletico at the Bernabeu in March

THE STADIUMS

1 SANTIAGO BERNABEU
After the old ground's wooden stands were used for firewood during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, a new Chamartin (later renamed after the club president) was opened in 1947. Has hosted the 1982 World Cup Final, three European Cup Finals, the Euro 64 Final and will stage next year's Champions League Final. Capacity 80,354.

2 VICENTE CALDERON
Originally called Estadio Manzanares when built in 1966, the ground has a capacity of 54,851 and regularly stages Spain internationals. Likely to be torn down when Atletico move to the Olympic Stadium next year.

3 COLISEUM ALFONSO PEREZ
Opened in 1998, the home stadium of Getafe, which has a capacity of 17,000, is named after the former Real Madrid and Barcelona striker, even though he never represented his home-town club or even played at the ground.

4 ESTADIO TERESA RIVERO
The home ground of Rayo Vallecano holds 15,500 spectators and was opened in 1976.

5 OLYMPIC STADIUM
The Estadio La Peineta is currently used for athletics and will have its capacity expanded from 20,000 to 73,000 when Atletico move in. It will also be the main stadium in Madrid's bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.

minute of winning the European Cup themselves in 1974 when they were taken to a replay by Bayern Munich.

In 1987 former Marbella mayor Jesus Gil, another Franco favourite, became Atletico president and during his tenure they went through 30 coaches. The *Colchoneros* ("mattress makers") did enjoy one outstanding double-winning season – inspired by Serbian playmaker Milinko Pantic – in 1995-96, after which Gil started to pay a fortune for top foreign stars such as Christian Vieri and Juninho. As a result the club lost balance, momentum and eventually their top-flight status. Gil, meanwhile, ended up in jail.

At Real, home-grown striker Raul and goalkeeper Iker Casillas helped the club win the Champions League in 1998 and 2000, but it was an influx of big-money signings that captured all the headlines.

Galacticos policy

Perez, who is now in his second term as president, introduced a galacticos policy that saw the arrival of Luis Figo, Zidane, Ronaldo and David Beckham – but only one last Champions League trophy, when they beat Bayer Leverkusen in the 2002 Final.

The return of Perez this summer saw further astronomical high-profile signings as he spent over £215million on a host of star names. With this season's Champions League Final being staged at the Bernabeu, he will expect nothing less than a 10th European crown this term.

After the lucrative loss to Liverpool of Fernando Torres, the young striker whose goals pushed Atletico back into the top flight and Europe, they signed Sergio Aguero and Diego

Forlan to become a free-scoring force once more. Along with Simao, Jose Antonio Reyes and Maxi Rodriguez, they should light up the Vicente Calderon this season. However, it will almost certainly be their last one at the old ground as the club are expected to move into the city's Olympic Stadium next year.

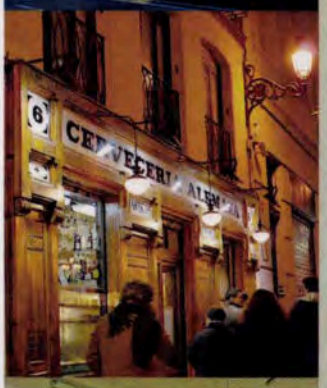
The city's third top-flight club, Getafe, were formed in 1983 following the merger of two other clubs, but within 20 years they went through the entire Spanish football pyramid to reach La Liga in 2004. Mainly thanks to foreign coaches Bernd Schuster and Michael Laudrup, the club have twice been Spanish Cup runners-up and reached the quarter-finals of the 2008 UEFA Cup before losing to Bayern Munich on away goals.

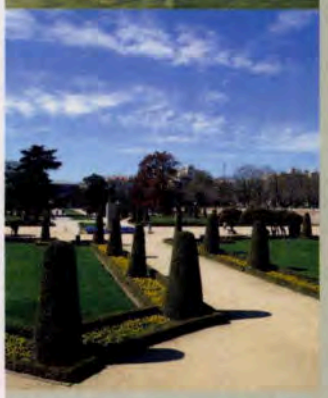
> **"During president Jesus Gil's tenure, Atletico went through 30 coaches"**

Based at the staunchly left-wing district of Vallecas, Rayo Vallecano have yo-yoed between the top two divisions for several years. Currently in the second tier, their greatest achievement came during the 2000-01 season when, having qualified through the fair play campaign, they made it through to the UEFA Cup quarter-finals before going out to eventual runners-up Deportivo Alaves. ●

Our turn now...strike partners Aguero (10) and Forlan hail an Atletico goal against Real

MADRID SURVIVAL GUIDE





Capital gains

● ARRIVAL & TRANSPORT
Barajas airport is about 10 miles east of the city centre, linked by the city's superb metro network. A bus service runs to central Plaza de Colon, while a taxi to town is about €30.

● HOTELS & INFORMATION
The tourist office (c/Duque de Medinaceli 2, 34/91 429 4951, www.aboutmadrid.com) has airport and Chamartin station branches. The most striking hotel is the Palacio del Retiro (Alfonso XII 14, 34/91 523 7460/www.ac-hotels.com [E250-500]. Budget options are around Plaza Santa Ana.

● EATING & DRINKING
Local cuisine is traditionally hearty stews and cuts of pork, although tapas bars abound. For drinks, try the lively quarter around Plaza Santa Ana. Bars such as OK Madrid (c/San Jose de la Salle) ring the Bernabeu, like, while Atletico fans frequent Bar Resines (Paseo de los Melancolicos) and Offside (opposite club shop).

● DAYTIME ENTERTAINMENT
The "Golden Triangle" contains the historic Prado gallery, the Reina Sofia (the national gallery of modern art) and the private collection of the Thyssen-Bornemisza. Also try the beautiful Retiro park and a panoramic ride on the Teleferico de Madrid cable car (from Casa de Campo to Parque del Oeste).

● MATCH DAY
Real has its own metro stop, Estadio Bernabeu, on line 10. Ticket booths are dotted around the ground and Gate 42 on Concha Espina offers tickets a couple of days beforehand. You can also buy online at www.servicaixa.com. The club superstore (10.30am-8.30pm daily) is at Gate 55 on c/Padre Damian. Stadium tours (34/902 311 709) costing €15/10 run from Monday to Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 10.30am-6.30pm, ending two hours earlier on match days. The dear seats are in the Anfiteatro Preferencia and Tribuna Preferencia. Vicente Calderon is a short walk from Piramides metro on line 5. You can buy tickets from ServiCaixa cashpoints (www.servicaixa.com). The club museum is open 11am-7pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Getafe's Coliseum Alfonso Perez is in the southern suburb of Las Margaritas (cercania suburban line C4), while Rayo Vallecano's ground is by Portazgo on the M1 metro line, south-east of Atocha. The Olympic Stadium is near the airport.

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

● Santiago Bernabeu
Oct 18 Real v Valladolid
Oct 21 Real v Milan (CL)
Nov 1 Real v Getafe

● Vicente Calderon
Oct 4 Atletico v Zaragoza
Oct 25 Atletico v Mallorca

● Coliseum Alfonso Perez
Oct 4 Getafe v Osasuna
Oct 25 Getafe v Bilbao

● Estadio Teresa Rivero
Oct 4 Rayo v Betis
Oct 18 Rayo v Cadiz
Nov 1 Rayo v Elche

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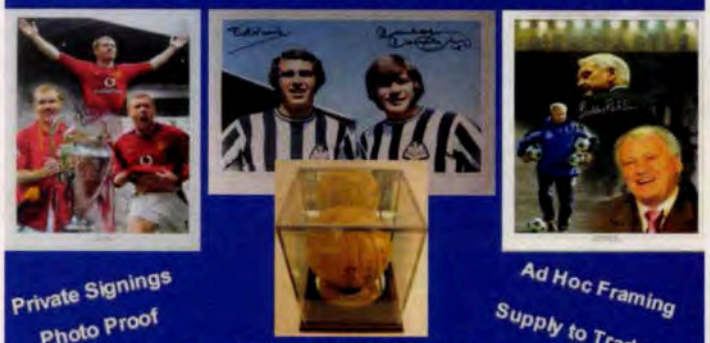

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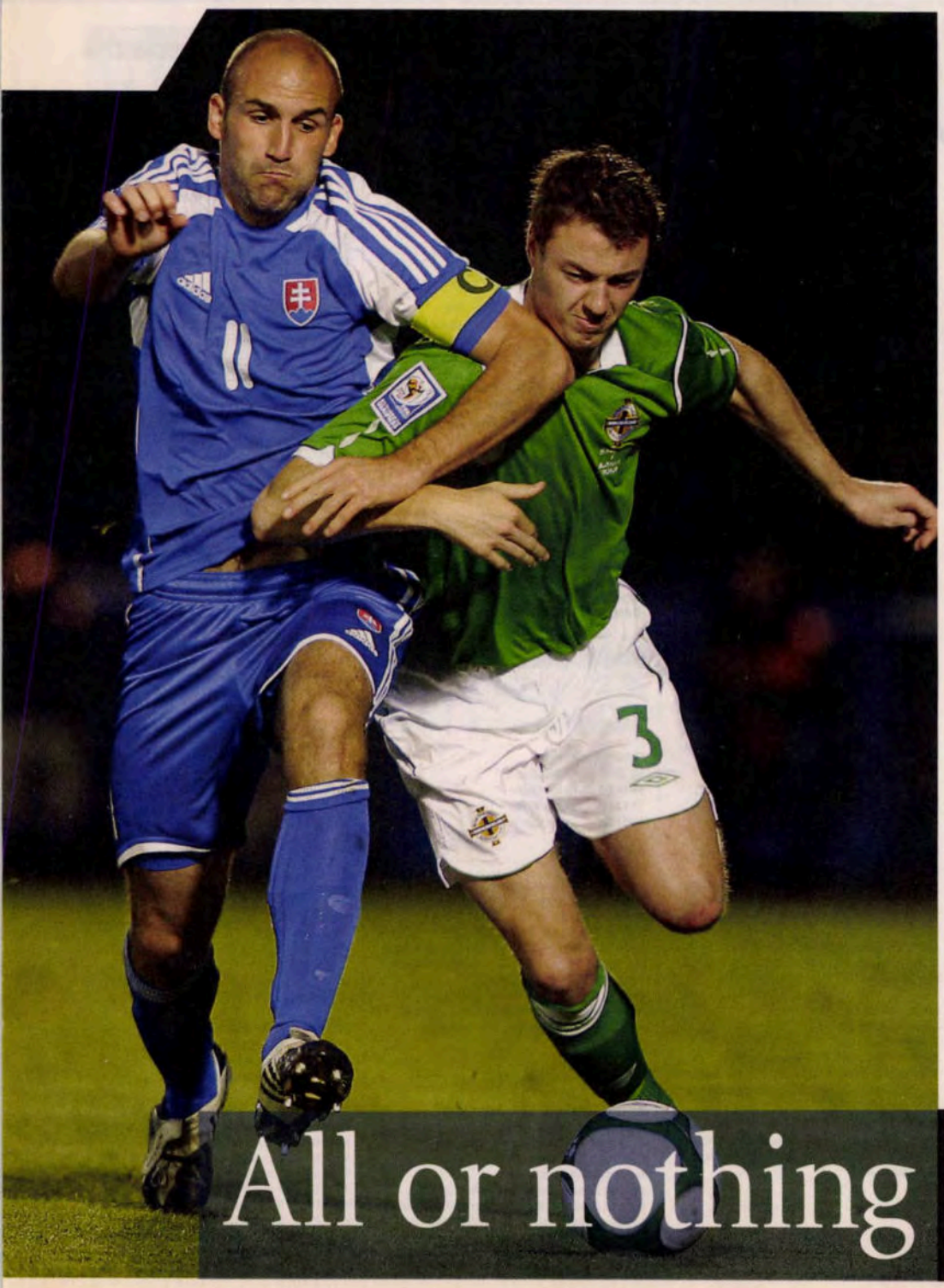

All or nothing

As qualification issues for next year's World Cup finals in South Africa start to get serious, Slovakia's Robert Vittek (left) gets to grips with Jonny Evans of Northern Ireland in their European Group 3 tussle in Belfast. More information and tables, page 84.

INTERNATIONALS

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Leaving...Vercauteren

BELGIUM

Franky says goodbye

Franky Vercauteren quit as coach of the national team following the humiliating 2-1 defeat away to Armenia in the World Cup qualifiers.

The former international winger took control on a temporary basis after Rene Vandereycken was sacked in April and had been due to hand over to Dick Advocaat – who recently departed as boss of Zenit St Petersburg in Russia – at the start of 2010.

Hat-trick hero...Nilmar

BRAZIL

Nilmar hits treble

Former Internacional striker Nilmar scored his first international hat-trick in the 4-2 win over Chile.

The rejuvenated striker, who is now with Villarreal in Spain, made his Brazil debut back in 2003 but has only played 10 times since, including one appearance in this year's Confederations Cup in South Africa.

CAMBODIA

Future plans

The Football Federation of Cambodia is to spend £3million on a new national training centre in Takeo, 25 miles from Phnom Penh.

RESULTS

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Q (in tables) = qualified for the finals

AFRICA

(6 finals places, one of which goes automatically to South Africa as hosts)

3rd stage

Group winners qualify for the finals

Group A

Sep 5 - Libreville
Gabon 0
Cameroon 2 (Emana 65, Eto'o 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Ndinya (Ken)
Gabon: Ovono - Ambourouet, Meye, Akouassaga, Moundounga, P Aubameyang (Mouloungui 73), Mbanangoye, Kessany (Djissikadie 82), Moubamba, Brou (R Do Marcolino 46), Cousin.
Cameroon: Kameni - Assou-Ekotto, Nkoulou, Bassong (R Song 27), Geremi, Emana, Makoun, Somen (Aloo 47), Mbia, Webo (Eyong 77), Eto'o.

Sep 6 - Lome
Togo 1 (M Salifou 3)
Morocco 1 (Taarabt 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,651. **Ref:** Ssegonga (Uga)
Togo: Obilale (Agassa 58) - Nibombe, Akakpo, Mangoh, Romao, Ahodikpe, Toure, M Salifou, Dossevi (Senaya 78), Kader, Adebayor.
Morocco: Lamyaghri - Alioui, Zemmama, Erbate, Mahdoufi, Benatia, Kharja (Benjelloun 76), Safri, Boussoufa (Taarabt 64), Hadji (Zairi 87), Chamakh.

Sep 9 - Yaounde
Cameroon 2 (Makoun 25, Eto'o 64)
Gabon 1 (Cousin 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,000. **Ref:** Bennaceur (Tun)
Cameroon: Kameni - Assou-Ekotto, R Song, A Song, Nkoulou, Geremi, Emana (Ngom Kome 85), Makoun (Chedjou 80), Nguemo, Webo (Aloo 73), Eto'o.
Gabon: Ovono - Ambourouet, Meye, Akouassaga, Moundounga, Nguema (Mouloungui 79), Issiemou, Brou, Moubamba, Mbanangoye (Djissikadie 72), P Aubameyang (Cousin 59).

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon	4	2	1	1	4	2	7
Gabon	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
Togo	4	1	2	1	2	4	5
Morocco	4	0	3	1	2	3	3

Remaining games
10.10.09 Cameroon-Togo
10.10.09 Gabon-Morocco
14.11.09 Morocco-Cameroon
14.11.09 Togo-Gabon

Group B

Sep 6 - Maputo
Mozambique 1 (Tico-Tico 66)
Kenya 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)
Mozambique: Kapango - Genito (Josemar 63), Paito, Simao, Mexer, Domingues, Mano, Dario Khan, Miro (Hagi 78), Dario, Tico-Tico (Sitoe 82).
Kenya: W Ochieng - M Otieno, P Ochieng, Mwangi (Atieno 78), J Owino, G Owino, Mariaga, Makacha (Wetende 71), Mambo, P Onyango (Mugabi 58), Oliech.

Sep 6 - Abuja
Nigeria 2 (Odemwingie 23, Eneramo 80)
Tunisia 2 (Nabil 24, Darragi 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, I Uche (Obinna 65), Taiwo, Adefemi, Adeleye, Mikel, Ogbuke Obasi (Kanu 68), Olofinjana (Eneramo 56), K Uche, Odemwingie.
Tunisia: Mathlouthi - Hagui, Ragued, Jemaa, Mikari, Ghezal, Ben Saada (Dhaouadi 80), Korbi (Mrabet 60), Nabil (Felhi 75), Souissi, Darragi.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia	4	2	2	0	6	3	8
Nigeria	4	1	3	0	5	2	6
Mozambique	4	1	1	2	2	4	4
Kenya	4	1	0	3	3	7	3

Remaining games
10.10.09 Nigeria-Mozambique
10.10.09 Tunisia-Kenya
14.11.09 Kenya-Nigeria
14.11.09 Mozambique-Tunisia

Group C

Sep 5 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Egypt 1 (Hassan 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Lamptey (Gha)
Rwanda: Ndori - Aniweta (Sibomana 79), Sadou, Ngaboyisibo, Kapet, Ndikumana, Ouon, Said (Bokota 60), Niyonzima, Gatete, Karekezi (Birori 81).
Egypt: El Hadary - Fathi, H Said, Gomaa, Shawky, Mahdy (Eigabas 33), Raouf (Barakat 59), Moawad, Hassan (Ahmed Eid 70), A Said, Abd Rabo.

Sep 6 - Blida
Algeria 1 (Saifi 59)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Seechurn (Mts)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Bougherra, Halliche, Mansouri, Belhadj, Yahia (Meghni 46), Lemmouchia, Matmour, Ziani, Djebbour (Ghezzal 65), Saifi (Ghilas 78).
Zambia: Mweene - D Banda, Hichani, Mbola, Sunzu, J Mulenga, Chivuta (H Banda 76), Musonda, Sakuwaha (Chamanga 68), F Katongo, C Katongo (Singuluma 76).

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Egypt	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Zambia	4	1	1	2	2	4	4
Rwanda	4	0	1	3	0	5	1

Remaining games
10.10.09 Zambia-Egypt
11.10.09 Algeria-Rwanda
14.11.09 Egypt-Algeria
14.11.09 Rwanda-Zambia

Group D

Sep 6 - Cotonou
Benin 1 (Aoudou 87)
Mali 1 (Samassa 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 33,000. **Ref:** Damon (SAf)
Benin: Djidonou - Ahoueya, Chrysostome, Johnson, Singbo (Adoun 39), S Tchomogo (Aoudou 79), Pote (Koukou 79), Ogounbiyi, Boco, Angan, Omotoyossi.
Mali: Mahamadou Sidibe - Samassa (A Keita 83), A Coulibaly, S Coulibaly (Maiga 55), Tamboura, Soumare, Mahamane Traore (M Diallo 63), B Traore, D Diakite, S Keita, Kanoute.

Sep 6 - Accra
Ghana 2 (Muntari 14, Essien 52)
Sudan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,000. **Ref:** Abd El Fatah (Egy)
Ghana: Kingson - Inkoom, Mensah, Annan, Paintsil, Essien, Appiah (Kingston 74), Afful, E Addo, Muntari (Dramani 88), M Amoah (Gyan 86).
Sudan: Hafez - El Basha, Yousif, Omer (Balla 64), Abakar (Maaz 81), Ahmad, Sami, Idris, M Abdalla (R Abdalla 68), Farah, El Tahir.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (Q)	4	4	0	0	7	0	12
Mali	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Benin	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Sudan	4	0	1	3	1	6	1

Remaining games
10.10.09 Mali-Sudan
11.10.09 Benin-Ghana
14.11.09 Ghana-Mali
14.11.09 Sudan-Benin

Group E

Sep 5 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 5 (Panandetiguiri og 9, Drogba 48, 64, Y Toure 54, Keita 68)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 78,209. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Ivory Coast: Barry - Eboue, K Toure, Tiene (E Kone 81), Boka, Y Toure, Zokora, Bamba, Keita (Kouassi 88), S Kalou, Drogba (Sanogo 85).
Burkina Faso: Diakite - M Tall, B Kone, Panandetiguiri, Kere, Koulibaly, Kabore (Koffi 88), Traore, Pitroipa, Zoundi (Bance 54), Dagano.

Sep 5 - Blantyre
Malawi 2 (Msowoya 46, 59)
Guinea 1 (Kalabane 37)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Codjia (Ben)
Malawi: Sanudi - Wadabwa, Sangala, Kamanga, Chavula, Mponda, Kafoteka, Mwakasungula, Banda (Msowoya 46), Kamwendo (Ngambi 71), Mwafulirwa (Nyirenda 83).
Guinea: Kemoko Camara - D Balde, Zayatte, I Camara, A Camara, Mansare (Youla 68), K Sylla, Feindouno (Ibrahima Bangoura 85), Kalabane, D Kaba, Ismail Bangoura.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 3RD STAGE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast	4	4	0	0	15	3	12
Burkina Faso	4	2	0	2	7	10	6
Guinea	4	1	0	3	6	9	3
Malawi	4	1	0	3	3	9	3

Remaining games
10.10.09 Malawi-Ivory Coast
11.10.09 Guinea-Burkina Faso
14.11.09 Burkina Faso-Malawi
14.11.09 Ivory Coast-Guinea

ASIA

(4.5 finals places)

4th stage

Top two in both groups qualified for the finals. The third-placed countries progressed to the Asia section play-off

Group 1

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH STAGE – GP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia (Q)	8	6	2	0	12	1	20
Japan (Q)	8	4	3	1	11	6	15
Bahrain	8	3	1	4	6	8	10
Qatar	8	1	3	4	5	14	6
Uzbekistan	8	1	1	6	5	10	4

06.09.08 Bahrain-Japan 2-3
06.09.08 Qatar-Uzbekistan 3-0
10.09.08 Qatar-Bahrain 1-1
10.09.08 Uzbekistan-Australia 0-1
15.10.08 Australia-Qatar 4-0
15.10.08 Japan-Uzbekistan 1-1
19.11.08 Bahrain-Australia 0-1
19.11.08 Qatar-Japan 0-3
11.02.09 Japan-Australia 0-0
11.02.09 Uzbekistan-Bahrain 0-1
28.03.09 Japan-Bahrain 1-0
28.03.09 Uzbekistan-Qatar 4-0
01.04.09 Australia-Uzbekistan 2-0
01.04.09 Bahrain-Qatar 1-0
06.06.09 Qatar-Australia 0-0
06.06.09 Uzbekistan-Japan 0-1
10.06.09 Australia-Bahrain 2-0
10.06.09 Japan-Qatar 1-1
17.06.09 Australia-Japan 2-1
17.06.09 Bahrain-Uzbekistan 1-0

Group 2

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH STAGE – GP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea (Q)	8	4	4	0	12	4	16
North Korea (Q)	8	3	3	2	7	5	12
Saudi Arabia	8	3	3	2	8	8	12
Iran	8	2	5	1	8	7	11
UAE	8	0	1	7	6	17	1

06.09.08 Saudi Arabia-Iran 1-1
06.09.08 UAE-North Korea 1-2
10.09.08 North Korea-South Korea 1-1
10.09.08 UAE-Saudi Arabia 1-2
15.10.08 Iran-North Korea 2-1
15.10.08 South Korea-UAE 4-1
19.11.08 Saudi Arabia-South Korea 0-2
19.11.08 UAE-Iran 1-1
11.02.09 Iran-South Korea 1-1
11.02.09 North Korea-Saudi Arabia 1-0
28.03.09 Iran-Saudi Arabia 1-2
28.03.09 North Korea-UAE 2-0
01.04.09 Saudi Arabia-UAE 3-2
01.04.09 South Korea-North Korea 1-0
06.06.09 North Korea-Iran 0-0
06.06.09 UAE-South Korea 0-2

COSTA RICA

Ticos appoint new boss

Former Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago coach Rene Simoes has replaced Rodrigo Kenton, who was sacked following the team's poor recent form in the World Cup qualifiers.

After leading the six-team group for a large chunk of the campaign, Costa Rica have lost their last three games and fallen to fourth place.

It's all over...Koller (left)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Koller retires – again

Jan Koller quit the national team for a second time after the 2-2 draw with Slovakia. "Nobody will persuade me again," said the 36-year-old, who retired from international football after Euro 2008.

"I would only be in the way. It was a mistake to come back against Slovakia."

Coach Ivan Hasek made six changes for the next game, at home against San Marino, and the 7-0 win equalled the national side's record margin of victory.

HUNGARY

Koeman to carry on

National coach Erwin Koeman has had his contract extended by two years, taking him up to the end of the 2012 European Championship qualifiers.

Euro challenge...Koeman

10.06.09	Iran-UAE	1-0
10.06.09	South Korea-Saudi Arabia	0-0
17.06.09	Saudi Arabia-North Korea	0-0
17.06.09	South Korea-Iran	1-1

Asia section play-off

Winners Bahrain will meet New Zealand, the Oceania section winners, for a place in the finals

1st leg

Sep 5 - Manama
Bahrain 0
Saudi Arabia 0
Att: 16,000. **Ref:** Nishimura (Jap)
Bahrain: Jaffer - M Hubail, Jalal, Ahmed (Okwunwanne 10), Salmeen, Latif, Aaish, Isa (Abdulrahman 81), Omar, S Mohamed, Baba.
Saudi Arabia: Ali - Shuhail, Al Dosary, Ateef (Al Ghannam 87), Hawsawi, Noor, Sulimani, Al Montashari, Al Qahtani (Al Jassam 81), Kariri, Al Hawsawi (Al Shamrani 65).

2nd leg

Sep 9 - Riyadh
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Shamrani 13, Al Montashari 90)
Bahrain 2 (Okwunwanne 42, Latif 90+)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Agg 2-2. Bahrain on away goals
Saudi Arabia: Ali - Shuhail (Fallatah 82), Sulimani, Al Ghannam (Ateef 63), Hawsawi, Kariri, Noor, Al Montashari, Al Jassam (Al Hawsawi 78), Al Shamrani, Al Qahtani.
Bahrain: Jaffer - Fatadi, Okwunwanne (Abdulwahab 82), M Hubail, Omar, Baba, S Mohamed, Jalal, Aaish (Abdulrahman 76), Isa, Ahmed (Latif 66).

Asia/Oceania play-off

10.10.09	Bahrain-New Zealand
14.11.09	New Zealand-Bahrain

CONCACAF

(3.5 finals places)

4th stage

Top three qualify for the finals. The fourth-placed country will meet the fifth-placed South American country in a two-leg play-off for a place in the finals

Sep 5 - San Jose
Costa Rica 0
Mexico 3 (Dos Santos 45, Franco 61, Guardado 70)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
Costa Rica: Navas - Johnson, Delgado, Diaz, Umana, Oviedo (Ledezma 63), Borges, Alonso (Herrera 74), Hernandez (Sirias 50), Ruiz, Saborio.
Mexico: G Ochoa - Osorio, Salcido, Magallon, Juarez, Torrado, I Castro, J A Castro, Dos Santos (N Castillo 80), Blanco (Sabah 74), Franco (Guardado 68).

Sep 5 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 4 (Pavon 20, 28, Guevara 62, D Suazo 83)
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (K Baptiste 86)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 38,000. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)
Honduras: N Valladares - Sabillon, Norales, Figueroa, E Izaguirre, Thomas, Guevara (Alvarez 72), Turcios (M Valladares 77), R Nunez, Pavon, J Palacios (D Suazo 59).
Trinidad & Tobago: Ince - M Andrews, C Edwards, Spann (Tinto 46), Samuel, Daniel (K Baptiste 79), Abu Bakr, Theobald (L Andrews 76), Noel, Jones, Glen.

Sep 5 - Sandy
United States 2 (Dempsey 41, Altidore 45)
El Salvador 1 (Castillo 32)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 19,066. **Ref:** Pineda (Hnd)
United States: Howard - Spector, Marshall, Bocanegra, Bornstein, Dempsey, Feilhaber (Beckerman 80), Bradley, Donovan, Davies (Holden 73), Altidore (Torres 85).
El Salvador: Montes - Marvin Gonzalez, Henriquez, Salazar, Umanzor, Flores (Reyes 63), Alvarez (Romero 50), Sanchez, Quintanilla (Rudis Corrales 75), Castillo, Zelaya.

Sep 9 - San Salvador
El Salvador 1 (Rudis Corrales 90)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
El Salvador: Montes - Henriquez, Castillo (Pacheco 74), Marvin Gonzalez, Salazar, Romero, Alvarez (Coreas 76), Quintanilla, Sanchez, Umanzor (Rudis Corrales 81), Zelaya.
Costa Rica: R Gonzalez - Umana, Sirias, Diaz, Herrera, Borges, Bolanos (Centeno 64), Oviedo, Marshall, Ledezma (Sequeira 74), Ruiz (Sunsing 76).

Sep 9 - Mexico City
Mexico 1 (Blanco pen 75)
Honduras 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 97,897. **Ref:** Campbell (Jam)
Mexico: G Ochoa - Salcido, Magallon, Osorio, J A Castro (Barrera 63), Juarez, I Castro, Guardado, Blanco, Dos Santos (Rojas 80), Sabah (Cacho 71).
Honduras: N Valladares - E Izaguirre, Chavez, Figueroa, Sabillon (Garcia 46), W Palacios, Guevara, Turcios, R Nunez (De Leon 70), Pavon, D Suazo (Costly 60).

Sep 9 - Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 0
United States 1 (Clark 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,700. **Ref:** Aguilar (ElS)
Trinidad & Tobago: Ince - C Edwards, Abu Bakr, Lawrence, Samuel, Tinto (Daniel 66), Leon, Noel (Scotland 84), Spann (K Baptiste 72), Glen, Jones.
United States: Howard - Spector, Onyewu, Bocanegra, Bornstein, Dempsey (Holden 82), Clark, Bradley, Donovan, Davies (Ching 77), Altidore (Feilhaber 63).

WC QUALS: CONCACAF – 4TH STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
United States	8	5	1	2	14	9	16
Mexico	8	5	0	3	12	9	15
Honduras	8	4	1	3	14	8	13
Costa Rica	8	4	0	4	9	13	12
El Salvador	8	2	2	4	8	10	8
Trinidad & Tob	8	1	2	5	8	16	5

Remaining games

10.10.09	Costa Rica-Trinidad & Tob
10.10.09	Honduras-United States
10.10.09	Mexico-El Salvador
14.10.09	El Salvador-Honduras
14.10.09	Trinidad & Tob-Mexico
14.10.09	United States-Costa Rica

CONCACAF/South America play-off

14.11.09	4th-placed CONCACAF country-5th-placed South American country
18.11.09	5th-placed South American country-4th-placed CONCACAF country

EUROPE

(13 finals places)

Group winners qualify for the finals. The best eight runners-up* will meet in four head-to-head two-leg play-off ties, the winners of which will also qualify for the finals

**Determined by points gained against teams finishing first, third, fourth and fifth in the respective groups*

Group 1

Sep 5 - Copenhagen
Denmark 1 (Bendtner 43)
Portugal 1 (Liedson 86)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,998. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Denmark: Andersen - Jacobsen, Kjaer, Christensen, Silberbauer (Kvist 66), Martin Jorgensen (Norregaard 61), Christian Poulsen, Rommedahl, Tomasson, J Poulsen (Gronkjaer 90), Bendtner.
Portugal: Eduardo - Bosingwa, Ricardo Carvalho, Bruno Alves, Duda, Pepe, Tiago (Liedson 46), Deco, Raul Meireles (Nuno Gomes 81), Simao (Nani 71), Cristiano Ronaldo.

Sep 5 - Budapest
Hungary 1 (Huszti pen 78)
Sweden 2 (Mellberg 9, Ibrahimovic 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,169. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Hungary: Babos - Szelesi, Juhasz (Timar 63), Gyepes, Halmosi, Dardai (Torghelle 46), Vadocz, Gera, Hajnal (Buzsaky 84), Dzsudzsak, Huszti.
Sweden: Isaksson - M Nilsson, Mellberg, Safari, Majstorovic, R Elm, Kallstrom, A Svensson, Holmen (Hysen 86), Ibrahimovic, Elmander (Berg 75).

Sep 9 - Tirana
Albania 1 (Bogdani 52)
Denmark 1 (Bendtner 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Albania: Ujkani - Dallku, Cana, Curri, Beqiri (Hyka 46), Agolli, Bulku, Duro, Skela (Vila 84), Bogdani (Lika 78), Salihi.
Denmark: T Sorensen - Christian Poulsen, Kjaer, Christensen, Kvist, Jacobsen, J Poulsen (Gronkjaer 54), Rommedahl, Tomasson (Larsen 75), Martin Jorgensen (Norregaard 69), Bendtner.

Sep 9 - Budapest
Hungary 0
Portugal 1 (Pepe 9)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 42,000. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
Hungary: Babos - Bodnar, Juhasz, Gyepes, Halmosi, Dardai (Priskin 65), B Toth (Buzsaky 83), Vadocz, Dzsudzsak, Huszti (Hajnal 65), Torghelle.
Portugal: Eduardo - Bosingwa, Ricardo Carvalho, Bruno Alves, Duda, Deco (Simao 49), Pepe, Tiago (Rolando 89), Raul Meireles, Liedson (Nani 82), Cristiano Ronaldo.

Sep 9 - Valletta
Malta 0
Sweden 1 (Azzopardi og 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,705. **Ref:** McCourt (NI)
Malta: Hogg - Manny Muscat, Azzopardi, Said, A Muscat (Briffa 62), G Agius, Cohen, S Bajada (Failla 73), Scicluna, Pace, M Mifsud.
Sweden: Isaksson - M Nilsson, Mellberg, Majstorovic, Safari, R Elm, A Svensson (Berg 71), Kallstrom, Holmen (Hysen 58), Elmander (S Larsson 83), Ibrahimovic.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	8	5	3	0	15	4	18
Sweden	8	4	3	1	9	3	15
Portugal	8	3	4	1	10	5	13
Hungary	8	4	1	3	9	5	13
Albania	9	1	4	4	5	9	7
Malta	9	0	1	8	0	22	1

Remaining games

10.10.09	Denmark-Sweden
10.10.09	Portugal-Hungary
14.10.09	Denmark-Hungary
14.10.09	Portugal-Malta
14.10.09	Sweden-Albania

Group 2

Sep 5 - Tel Aviv
Israel 0
Latvia 1 (Gorkss 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,625. **Ref:** Kircher (Ger)
Israel: Awat - Shpungin, Alberman (Cohen 46), Strool, Ben Dayan, Kayal, Katan, Barda, Golan (Sahar 63), Keinan, Benayoun (Baruchyan 67).
Latvia: Vanins - Astafjevs, Klava, Ivanovs, Rubins (Zirnis 81), Karlsons, Gorkss, Kacanovs, Cauna (Zigajevs 81), Kolesnicenko, Verpakovskis (Pereplotkins 90).

Sep 5 - Chisinau
Moldova 0
Luxembourg 0
Att: 7,820. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Moldova: Stanislav Namasco - Catinsus, Golovatenco, Armas, Lascencov, Onica, Gatcan, Comlionoc (Andronic 81), Calincov, Bugaiov (Suvorov 77), Sofroni.
Luxembourg: Joubert - Kintziger, Hoffmann, Blaise, Payal, Peters, Strasser, Bettmer, Janisch (Collette 58), Pupovac (Da Mota 84), Lombardelli (A Leweck 79).

Sep 5 - Basle
Switzerland 2 (Grichting 83, Padalino 88)
Greece 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 38,500. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Switzerland: Benaglio - Nef (Derdiyok 61), Von Bergen, Grichting, Magnin, Padalino, Huggel, Fernandes (Yakin 68), Barnetta, Frei, Nkufo (Vonlanthen 81).
Greece: Chalkias - Papastathopoulos, Moras, Kyrgiakos, Vyntra, Patsatzoglou, Katsouranis, Spyropoulos, Salpingidis (Samaras 46), Haristeas (Papadopoulos 73), Amanatidis (Gekas 81).
Sent off: Vyntra 42min.

Sep 9 - Tel Aviv
Israel 7 (Barda 9, 21, 44, Baruchyan 15, Golan 58, Sahar 63, 84)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 7,038. **Ref:** Svendsen (Den)
Israel: Awat (Davidovich 46) - Ben Haim, Strool, Ben Dayan, Kayal, Baruchyan, Barda (Sahar 58), Golan (Itzhaki 67), Ziv, Benayoun, Cohen.
Luxembourg: Oberweis - Kintziger, Payal (Pedro 46), Hoffmann, Blaise, Peters, Janisch (Collette 50), Bettmer, Lombardelli (A Leweck 65), Pupovac, Mutsch.

Ton up...Bhutia

50 goals Barcelona striker Thierry Henry has scored in his 113 internationals for France

INDIA

Century for skipper

National team captain Baichung Bhutia scored on his 100th appearance as India beat Kyrgyzstan 2-1 in the Nehru Cup.

"It's a dream come true to have scored in my 100th match. I also got the man of the match award. I could not have asked for more," said Bhutia, who is currently serving a six-month domestic ban after his club side, Mohun Bagan, accused him of not showing enough commitment following his appearance on a popular reality-TV dance show.

JAPAN

Fellow finalists lined up for friendly

Takeshi Okada's side hope to play England in a World Cup warm-up match, so long as the pair are not drawn in the same group in South Africa.

The two associations have reached a "basic agreement" on staging the friendly, possibly on May 29 in Austria, according to reports. Japan host Scotland and Togo in October, before travelling to Durban for a friendly against South Africa in November.

LESOTHO

Losing run is costly

National coach Zaviza Milosavljevic has been sacked

Sep 9 - Riga
Latvia 2 (Cauna 62, Astafjevs 75)
Switzerland 2 (Frei 43, Derdiyok 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,600. **Ref:** Kralovec (Cze)
Latvia: Vanins - Klava, Ivanovs, Gorkss, Kacanovs, Cauna (Zirnis 89), Kolesnicenko (Rafalskis 86), Astafjevs, Rubins, Karlsons (Grebis 85), Verpakovskis.
Switzerland: Benaglio - Lichtsteiner, Von Bergen, Grichting, Spycher, Padalino (Yakin 76), Fernandes (Derdiyok 79), Huggel, Barnetta (Vonlanthen 76), Frei, Nkufo.

Sep 9 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Andronic 90)
Greece 1 (Gekas 33)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,870. **Ref:** Stalhammar (Swe)
Moldova: Stanislav Namasco - Savinov (Andronic 79), Lascencov, Armas, Catinsus, Bulat, Sergiu Namasco (Comlionoc 56), Epureanu, Gatcan, Calincov, Bugaiov (Sofroni 46).
Greece: Chalkias - Patsatzoglou, Kyrgiakos, Spyropoulos, Moras (Papadopoulos 58), Tziolis, Katsouranis, Gekas, Karagounis (Amanatidis 76), Haristeas, Samaras.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	8	5	2	1	15	8	17
Greece	8	4	2	2	13	7	14
Latvia	8	4	2	2	13	8	14
Israel	8	3	3	2	17	9	12
Luxembourg	8	1	2	5	3	20	5
Moldova	8	0	3	5	3	12	3

Remaining games
10.10.09 Greece-Latvia
10.10.09 Israel-Moldova
10.10.09 Luxembourg-Switzerland
14.10.09 Greece-Luxembourg
14.10.09 Latvia-Moldova
14.10.09 Switzerland-Israel

Group 3

Sep 5 - Chorzow
Poland 1 (M Lewandowski 80)
Northern Ireland 1 (Lafferty 38)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 38,914. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Poland: Boruc - Golanski, Dudka, Zewlakow, Krzynowek, Blaszczykowski, M Lewandowski, Murawski (R Lewandowski 60), Guerreiro, Obraniak (Smolarek 46), Pawel Brozek.
Northern Ireland: Taylor - McAuley, Evans, Craigan, Clingan, Johnson, Hughes, Davis, McCann, Lafferty (Paterson 54), Healy.

Sep 5 - Bratislava
Slovakia 2 (Sestak 60, Hamsik pen 73)
Czech Republic 2 (Pudil 68, Baros 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,500. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Zabavnik, Strba, Weiss (Sapara 74), Hamsik, Holosko (Jendrisek 87), Sestak (Cech 82), Vittek. *Sent off: Hamsik 75min.*
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Sivok, Kadlec, Jankulovski, Hubschman, Stajner (Sverkos 83), Jarolim (Necid 65), Plasil, Pudil, Koller (Baros 55).

Sep 9 - Uherske Hradiste
Czech Republic 7 (Baros 28, 44, pen 45, 66, Sverkos 47, Necid 86, 90)
San Marino 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 8,120. **Ref:** Amirkhanyan (Arm)
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera (Stajner 77), Hubnik, Rozehnal, Kadlec (Pudil 46), Plasil, Hubschman, Rosicky (Jarolim 56), Baros, Necid, Sverkos.
San Marino: A Simoncini - Andreini, F Vitaioli, Della Valle, Mauro Marani (Bonini 65), Bacciocchi, Ciacci (M Vitaioli 75), Berretti, Bugli (Cervellini 90), Vannucci, Selva. *Sent off: Bacciocchi 82min.*

Sep 9 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 0
Slovakia 2 (Sestak 15, Holosko 67)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 13,019. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Northern Ireland: Taylor - McAuley, Craigan, Hughes, Evans, Johnson, Clingan (Baird 71), McCann (McGinn 71), Davis, Healy, Paterson (Brunt 76).
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Zabavnik, Kopunek, Strba, Weiss (Sapara 90), Vittek, Stoch (Jendrisek 80), Sestak (Holosko 65).

Sep 9 - Maribor
Slovenia 3 (Dedic 13, Novakovic 44, Birsa 62)
Poland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,226. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Slovenia: Samir Handanovic - Brecko, Mavric, Suler, Jokic, Dedic (Ljubijankic 58), Kirm, Radosavljevic (Pecnik 89), Koren, Novakovic, Birsa (Komac 71).
Poland: Boruc - Bosacki, Dudka, Zewlakow, Gancarczyk (Smolarek 61), Obraniak (Lobodzinski 46), Blaszczykowski, M Lewandowski, Guerreiro, Krzynowek, Pawel Brozek (R Lewandowski 61).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slovakia	8	6	1	1	21	8	19
Slovenia	8	4	2	2	13	4	14
N Ireland	9	4	2	3	13	9	14
Czech Rep	8	3	3	2	15	6	12
Poland	8	3	2	3	19	11	11
San Marino	9	0	0	9	1	44	0

Remaining games
10.10.09 Czech Rep-Poland
10.10.09 Slovakia-Slovenia
14.10.09 Czech Rep-Northern Ireland
14.10.09 Poland-Slovakia
14.10.09 San Marino-Slovenia

Group 4

Sep 5 - Lankaran
Azerbaijan 1 (E Mammadov 47)
Finland 2 (Tihinen 74, Johansson 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Trifonos (Cyp)
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Levin, Allahverdiyev, Sadigov, Yunisoglu, Shukurov, Nadirov (Akhtyamov 72), Djavadov, Abishov (Huseynov 46), E Mammadov (Amirguliyev 84), S Abbasov.
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Pasanen, Tihinen, Moisander, A Eremenko, Tainio (Litmanen 46), Lampi, Heikkinen, R Eremenko, Kuqi (Sjolund 72; Kolkka 84), Johansson.

Sep 5 - St Petersburg
Russia 3 (V Berezutsky 17, Pavlyuchenko pen 39, pen 45)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Constantin (Rom)
Russia: Akinfeev - Ignashevich, V Berezutsky (A Berezutsky 58), Anyukov, Zyrianov (Semshov 46), Semak, Bilyaletdinov, Bystrov, Denisov (Rebko 69), Kerzhakov, Pavlyuchenko.
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Michael Stocklasa, Vogt (S Buchel 82), Ritzberger, Oehri, Rechsteiner, Burgmeier, R Buchel, M Frick, T Beck (Hasler 57), Christen (R Beck 72).

Sep 9 - Hanover
Germany 4 (Ballack pen 14, Klose 55, 66, Podolski 71)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,369. **Ref:** Kakos (Gre)
Germany: Adler - Lahm, Mertesacker, Westermann, Schafer (Beck 46), Ballack, Hitzlsperger, Schweinsteiger (Trochowski 67), Ozil, Podolski, Gomez (Klose 46).
Azerbaijan: Agayev - Shukurov, Levin, S Abbasov, Allahverdiyev, Yunisoglu, Sadigov, Chertoganov, Nadirov (Ernani 57), E Mammadov (Huseynov 67), Djavadov. *Sent off: S Abbasov 50min.*

Sep 9 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 1 (Polverino 76)
Finland 1 (Litmanen pen 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,132. **Ref:** Panic (Bos)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Ritzberger, Michael Stocklasa, Rechsteiner, Oehri, Hasler (T Beck 80), M Buchel (Polverino 65), Rohrer (R Beck 85), Burgmeier, R Buchel, M Frick. *Sent off: M Buchel 75min (from the bench).*
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Pasanen, Hyypia, Tihinen, Moisander, A Eremenko, Heikkinen, Sadik (Kolkka 59), Litmanen (Kuqi 82), R Eremenko, Johansson.

Sep 9 - Cardiff
Wales 1 (J Collins 54)
Russia 3 (Semshov 36, Ignashevich 71, Pavlyuchenko 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,505. **Ref:** Moreira de Sousa (Por)
Wales: Hennessey - J Collins, Gabbidon (Vokes 74), Ricketts, Williams, Gunter, Stock, Edwards, Ledley, Ramsey, Bellamy.
Russia: Akinfeev - Ignashevich, V Berezutsky, Anyukov, Yanbayev, Zyrianov, Semshov (Pavlyuchenko 70), Semak, Arshavin, Bystrov, Kerzhakov (Rebko 84).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	8	7	1	0	24	4	22
Russia	8	7	0	1	18	4	21
Finland	8	4	2	2	11	12	14
Wales	8	3	0	5	6	10	9
Liechtenstein	8	0	2	6	2	19	2
Azerbaijan	8	0	1	7	1	13	1

Remaining games
10.10.09 Finland-Wales
10.10.09 Liechtenstein-Azerbaijan
10.10.09 Russia-Germany
14.10.09 Azerbaijan-Russia
14.10.09 Germany-Finland
14.10.09 Liechtenstein-Wales

Group 5

Sep 5 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Ibricic 6, Muslimovic 75)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,800. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Armenia: Kasparov - Hovsepyan, Arzumanyan, Yedigaryan (Yagan 75), Arakelyan (Minasyan 65), Tateosyan, Yavruyan (Goharyan 46), Agvan Mkrtchyan, Arman Karamyan, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Artavazd Karamyan.
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Supic - Spahic, Muratovic (Pjanic 64), Rahimic, Nadarevic, Salihovic, Vladavic, Jahic, Ibisevic (Muslimovic 67), Ibricic (Bajramovic 86), Dzeko.

Sep 5 - La Coruna
Spain 5 (Silva 41, 68, Villa 49, 85, Pique 50)
Belgium 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,441. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Spain: Casillas - Arbeloa (Albiol 83), Pique, Puyol, Capdevila, Xavi (Fabregas 70), Busquets, Xabi Alonso, Silva, Villa, Fernando Torres (Riera 66).
Belgium: Gillet - Vanden Borre, Van Buyten, Vermaelen, Vertonghen (Deschacht 29), Fellaini, Simons, Defour, Hazard (Mirallas 58), Dembele, Sonck (De Camargo 70).

Sep 5 - Kayseri
Turkey 4 (Tuncay 29, 72, Sercan 37, Arda 62)
Estonia 2 (Voskoboinikov 7, Vassiljev 53)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 28,569. **Ref:** Skjerven (Nor)
Turkey: Volkan Demirel - Gokhan Zan (Onder 36), Gokhan Gonul, Servet, Hakan Balta, Arda, Hamit Altintop, Emre Belozoglu (Ceyhun 78), Kazim (Halil Altintop 61), Tuncay, Sercan.
Estonia: Pareiko - Klavan, Piiroja, Barengrub, Enar Jaager, Vassiljev, Kruglov, Dmitrijev (Vunk 73), Lindpere, Oper (Kink 73), Voskoboinikov (Zenjov 54).

Sep 9 - Yerevan
Armenia 2 (Goharyan 23, Hovsepyan 51)
Belgium 1 (Van Buyten 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,300. **Ref:** Stavrev (Mac)
Armenia: Kasparov - Hovsepyan, Mkoyan, Arzumanyan, Agvan Mkrtchyan, Yedigaryan (Kakosyan 89), Arakelyan (K Mkrtchyan 14), Artavazd Karamyan, Arman Karamyan, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Goharyan (Yavruyan 31).
Belgium: Gillet - Simons, Van Buyten, Deschacht, Defour, De Camargo, Sonck (Lamah 81), Dembele, Swerts, Martens (De Sutter 54), Mirallas (Hazard 72).

Sep 9 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Salihovic 25)
Turkey 1 (Emre Belozoglu 4)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Supic - Spahic, Muratovic (Pjanic 61), Rahimic, Nadarevic, Jahic, Ibricic (Vladavic 79), Salihovic, Ibisevic (Muslimovic 69), Misimovic, Dzeko.
Turkey: Volkan Demirel - Gokhan Gonul, Onder (Ismail 46), Servet, Hakan Balta, Ceyhun, Emre Belozoglu, Hamit Altintop (Sercan 46), Arda, Tuncay, Semih.

Sep 9 - Merida
Spain 3 (Fabregas 33, Cazorla 81, Mata 90)
Estonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,362. **Ref:** Oriekhov (Ukr)
Spain: Casillas - Albiol, Pique, Marchena, Capdevila, Xavi, Senna, Fabregas, Villa (Cazorla 66), Fernando Torres (Guiza 57), Silva (Mata 79).
Estonia: Pareiko - Sisov (Enar Jaager 64), Rahn, Piiroja, Klavan, Zenjov (Voskoboinikov 46), Vunk, Vassiljev, Kruglov, Oper, Kink (Lindpere 71).

after just 16 months in the job following a run of nine games without a win.

NIGERIA

Coach's job is safe for now, confirm FA

Former international skipper Jay-Jay Okocha has been appointed as technical assistant to national coach Shuaibu Amodu.

"Taking panicky measures at this time may even worsen the situation, so sacking Amodu may not be the best solution to the problem at hand," said Nigerian FA technical committee member Adeboye Onigbinde.

Meanwhile, it has been announced that the Super Eagles will face Argentina in a friendly in London, on November 18, four days after their final World Cup qualifier against Kenya in Nairobi.

Under pressure...Amodu

PORTUGAL

Liedson on target

Sporting Lisbon's Brazil-born striker Liedson scored on his international debut to snatch a 1-1 draw against Denmark.

The 31-year-old was booked just three minutes after coming on as a half-time substitute. However, he made amends when he scored the equaliser four minutes before the final whistle.

Leveller...Liedson

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (Q)	8	8	0	0	21	2	24
Bosnia-Herz	8	5	1	2	21	8	16
Turkey	8	3	3	2	11	8	12
Belgium	8	2	1	5	11	18	7
Estonia	8	1	2	5	7	22	5
Armenia	8	1	1	6	5	18	4

Remaining games

10.10.09	Armenia-Spain
10.10.09	Belgium-Turkey
10.10.09	Estonia-Bosnia-Herzegovina
14.10.09	Bosnia-Herzegovina-Spain
14.10.09	Estonia-Belgium
14.10.09	Turkey-Armenia

Group 6

Sep 5 - Zagreb
Croatia 1 (Rakitic 24)
Belarus 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,628. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Croatia: Runje - Simunic, Krizanac, Corluka, Pranjic, Rakitic (Mandzukic 65), Vukojevic, Eduardo (Juric 82), Srna, Olic (Petric 74), Kranjcar.
Sent off: Corluka 79min.
Belarus: Zhevnov - Kulchy, Shitov, Kalachev, Yurevich, Omelyanchuk, Kornilenko (Kovel 77), V Hleb (Krivets 63), Bordachev (Stasevich 55), Sosnovsky, Verkhovtsov.

Sep 5 - Kiev
Ukraine 5 (Yarmolenko 18, Milevskyi 45, pen 90, Shevchenko pen 72, Selezniov pen 90+)
Andorra 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,870. **Ref:** Sipailo (Lat)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Mandzyuk, Chygrynskyi, Kucher, Kobin, Tymoshchuk, Husiev (Gai 71), Yarmolenko, Shevchenko (Homeniuk 81), Milevskyi, Voronin (Selezniov 66).
Andorra: Gomes - Ayala, Martinez, Sonejee, Silva, Vales, Pujol, Vieira (Escura 76), Toscano (Moreira 84), Jimenez, Moreno (G Garcia 82).

Sep 9 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 1 (Sonejee 70)
Kazakhstan 3 (Khizhnichenko 14, 35, Baltiyev 29)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 510. **Ref:** Toussaint (Lux)
Andorra: Gomes - Ayala, Sonejee, Vales (Escura 46), Bernaus, I Lima, Martinez, Moreno, Jimenez (Toscano 55), Vieira (Riera 87), Silva.
Kazakhstan: Mokin - Kirov, Kislitsyn, Karpovich, Abdulin, Averchenko, Logvinenko, Finonchenko (Skorykh 78), Kukeyev (Nurgaliyev 87), Baltiyev, Khizhnichenko (Erbes 90).

Sep 9 - Minsk
Belarus 0
Ukraine 0
Att: 21,727. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Belarus: Zhevnov - Shitov, Yurevich, Omelyanchuk, Sosnovsky, Plaskonny (Lentsevich 57), Kulchy, Kalachev, A Hleb, Kornilenko (Kovel 77), Kutuzov (V Hleb 87).
Ukraine: Pyatov - Mandzyuk, Chygrynskyi, Kucher, Kobin, Tymoshchuk, Husiev (Nazarenko 59), Gai, Yarmolenko, Shevchenko (Voronin 87), Milevskyi.

Sep 9 - Wembley
England 5 (Lampard pen 8, 59, Gerrard 18, 66, Rooney 77)
Croatia 1 (Eduardo 73)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 87,319. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
England: Green - Johnson, Terry, Upson, A Cole, Lennon (Beckham 80), Barry, Lampard, Gerrard (Milner 80), Rooney, Heskey (Defoe 60).
Croatia: Runje - Srna, Krizanac, Simunic, Pranjic, Mandzukic, Vukojevic, Pokrivac (Rakitic 46), Kranjcar, Eduardo (Klasnic 74), Olic (Petric 46).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England (Q)	8	8	0	0	31	5	24
Croatia	9	5	2	2	17	12	17
Ukraine	8	4	3	1	14	6	15
Belarus	8	3	1	4	15	11	10
Kazakhstan	8	2	0	6	10	23	6
Andorra	9	0	0	9	3	33	0

Remaining games

10.10.09	Belarus-Kazakhstan
10.10.09	Ukraine-England
14.10.09	Andorra-Ukraine
14.10.09	England-Belarus
14.10.09	Kazakhstan-Croatia

Group 7

Sep 5 - Graz
Austria 3 (Maierhofer 1, Janko 16, pen 59)
Faroe Islands 1 (A Olsen 84)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,300. **Ref:** Borg (Mlt)
Austria: Payer - Schiemer, Dragovic, Patocka (Ortlechner 46), Fuchs, Holzl, Pehlivan, Beichler (Wallner 79), Jantscher, Janko, Maierhofer (Hoffer 61).
Faroe Islands: Mikkelsen - Naes, a Bo, Atli Danielsen, E Hansen, Gregersen, Lokin, Benjaminsen (Jann Petersen 80), S Samuelsen, S Olsen (L Hanssen 67), Holst (A Olsen 71).

Sep 5 - Saint-Denis
France 1 (Henry 48)
Romania 1 (Escude og 55)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 78,209. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
France: Lloris - Escude, Gallas, Sagna, Evra, Gourcuff (Benzema 73), L Diarra, Toulalan, Henry, Anelka, Gignac (Ribery 56).
Romania: Coman - Rat, Maftei, Chivu, Radoi, Nicu (Bucur 77), Surdu (Codrea 87), Apostol, Mara (Roman 61), Ghioane, Marica.

Sep 9 - Toftir
Faroe Islands 2 (S Olsen 13, A Hansen 34)
Lithuania 1 (Danilevicius pen 22)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 1,942. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Faroe Islands: Mikkelsen - Davidsen, E Hansen, a Borg (B Olsen 89), Gregersen, Eliasen, Jann Petersen, S Samuelsen, A Hansen (A Olsen 68), Holst, S Olsen.
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Stankevicius, Dedura, Skerla, Klimavicius (Mikoliunas 60), Semberas, E Cesnauskis, Sernas, Ivaskevicius (Kalonas 82), Pilibaitis (Trakys 60), Danilevicius.

Sep 9 - Bucharest
Romania 1 (Bucur 54)
Austria 1 (Schiemer 83)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,505. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Romania: Coman - Sapunaru, Radoi, Chivu, Rat, Roman, Codrea (Lazar 71), Ghioane, Cristea (Surdu 86), Marica (Mazilu 78), Bucur.
Austria: Payer - Schiemer, Dragovic, Scharner, Fuchs, Pehlivan, Baumgartlinger, Holzl, Jantscher (Trimmel 62), Beichler (Wallner 73), Hoffer (Maierhofer 46).

Sep 9 - Belgrade
Serbia 1 (Milijas pen 13)
France 1 (Henry 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 49,256. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Serbia: Stojkovic - Kacar (Ninkovic 46), Vidic, Obradovic, Lukovic, Ivanovic, Krasic, Milijas (Kuzmanovic 71), Stankovic, Zigic, Jovanovic (Lazovic 74). *Sent off: Lazovic 89min.*
France: Lloris - Sagna, Gallas, Abidal, Evra, Gourcuff (A Diarra 86), Toulalan, L Diarra, Henry (Ribery 77), Anelka, Gignac (Mandanda 12).
Sent off: Lloris 9min.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Serbia	8	6	1	1	16	6	19
France	8	4	3	1	10	8	15
Austria	8	3	2	3	11	11	11
Lithuania	8	3	0	5	7	8	9
Romania	8	2	3	3	9	12	9
Faroe Islands	8	1	1	6	4	12	4

Remaining games

10.10.09	Austria-Lithuania
10.10.09	France-Faroe Islands
10.10.09	Serbia-Romania
14.10.09	France-Austria
14.10.09	Lithuania-Serbia
14.10.09	Romania-Faroe Islands

Group 8

Sep 5 - Sofia
Bulgaria 4 (Kishishev 45, Telkiyski 49, Berbatov 83, Domovchiyski 90)
Montenegro 1 (Jovetic 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,543. **Ref:** Asumaa (Fin)
Bulgaria: Ivankov - Kishishev, Kotev (Telkiyski 46), Angelov, Ilian Stoyanov, Yankov, Manolev, Rangelov (Domovchiyski 83), S Petrov, M Petrov (Georgiev 75), Berbatov.
Montenegro: Poleksic - Dzudovic, V Bozovic (Boskovic 55), Pavicevic, Basa (Fatic 73), Jovetic, Pejovic, Drincic, Vukcevic, Pekovic (Vucinic 69), Damjanovic.

Sep 5 - Nicosia
Cyprus 1 (Elia 30)
Republic of Ireland 2 (Doyle 6, Keane 83)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,191. **Ref:** Einwaller (Aut)
Cyprus: Avgousti - Elia, Christou, Charalambous, Avraam, Charalambides, Satsias (Maragkos 90), Michael (Alexandrou 72), Nikolaou, Aloneftis, Okkas (Christofi 90).
Rep Ireland: Given - O'Shea, Dunne, St Ledger, Kilbane, S Hunt (McGeady 67), Andrews, Whelan, Duff, Keane, Doyle (Folan 75).

Sep 5 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
Italy 2 (Kaladze og 56, og 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Borski (Pol)
Georgia: Lomaia - Lobjanidze, Sanaia, Kobiashvili, Kaladze, Razmadze (Tskitishvili 73), Ananidze (Vatsadze 59), Kenia, Khizanishvili, Khmaladze, Dvalishvili.
Italy: Buffon - Zambrotta, Cannavaro, Chiellini, Criscito, Palombo, Pirlo, Camoranesi (Santon 71), Marchionni (D'Agostino 57), Iaquinta, Rossi (Quagliarella 57).

Sep 9 - Turin
Italy 2 (Grosso 11, Iaquinta 40)
Bulgaria 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 26,122. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Italy: Buffon - Zambrotta, Cannavaro, Chiellini, Grosso, Camoranesi, De Rossi, Marchisio (Pepe 73), Pirlo, Gilardino (Rossi 58), Iaquinta (D'Agostino 84).
Bulgaria: Ivankov - Manolev, Angelov, Ilian Stoyanov, Kishishev, Yankov (Domovchiyski 73), Sarmov, S Petrov, M Petrov (Bojinov 63), Rangelov (Georgiev 63), Berbatov.

Sep 9 - Podgorica
Montenegro 1 (Vucinic pen 57)
Cyprus 1 (Okkas 64)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Zimmermann (Swi)
Montenegro: Poleksic - Pavicevic, Basa, Fatic, Pejovic, Drincic, Pekovic (Damjanovic 70), Boskovic (Kascelan 61), Vukcevic, Jovetic, Vucinic.
Cyprus: Avgousti - Satsias, Charalambous, Christou, Michael, Makrides, Nikolaou (Maragkos 83), Alexandrou (Aloneftis 46), Avraam, Okkas (Efrem 90), Konstantinou.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy	8	6	2	0	13	3	20
Rep Ireland	8	4	4	0	10	6	16
Bulgaria	8	2	5	1	10	7	11
Cyprus	8	1	3	4	8	12	6
Montenegro	8	0	5	3	7	13	5
Georgia	8	0	3	5	4	11	3

Remaining games

10.10.09	Cyprus-Bulgaria
10.10.09	Montenegro-Georgia
10.10.09	Rep Ireland-Italy
14.10.09	Bulgaria-Georgia
14.10.09	Italy-Cyprus
14.10.09	Rep Ireland-Montenegro

Group 9

Sep 5 - Reykjavik
Iceland 1 (Gudjohnsen 28)
Norway 1 (J A Riise 10)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,321. **Ref:** Tudor (Rom)
Iceland: Gunnleifsson - Steinsson, Solvi Jonsson (R Sigurdsson 90), K O Sigurdsson, I Sigurdsson, R Gislason, A E Gunnarsson (S Gislason 81), Gudjohnsen, B Gunnarsson, Hallfredsson (V Gunnarsson 89), Helguson.
Norway: Knudsen - Hogli, Waehler, Hangeland, J A Riise, Moldskred (Helstad 88), Grindheim, Hoseth (Brenne 46), Gamst Pedersen, Huseklepp (B H Riise 78), Carew.

Sep 5 - Glasgow
Scotland 2 (Brown 55, McFadden 81)
Macedonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,214. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Scotland: Gordon - Hutton, Weir, Brown (Hartley 73), Davidson (Whittaker 14), McManus, D Fletcher, G Alexander, McFadden, S Fletcher (Maloney 68), K Miller.
Macedonia: Nikoloski - Noveski, I Mitreski, Sedloski, Popov, Sumulikoski, Despotovski, Georgievski (Grozdanovski 69), Naumoski (Tasevski 65), Stojkov (Ibraimi 78), Pandev.

SOUTH AFRICA

Hosts' poor run of form continues

The World Cup hosts are struggling ahead of next year's tournament. The 1-0 loss to Republic of Ireland was their sixth consecutive defeat.

SOUTH KOREA

Aussies added to list

Seol Ki-hyeon, playing his first game for the national team in 18 months, scored the third goal in a 3-1 friendly win against Australia.

Due to a dispute between the Korean FA and the domestic K-League, the majority of the team were overseas players, with Lee Jung-soo of Japan's Kyoto Sanga and Monaco's Park Chu-young also on target as South Korea extended their unbeaten run to 26 games.

Back in favour...Seoul

THAILAND

Reid returns home

Peter Reid quit as national coach to become assistant manager at English Premier League side Stoke City.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Yorke joins the coaching staff

Dwight Yorke has accepted

Retiring...Yorke

Sep 9 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Helstad 2, J A Riise 25)
Macedonia 1 (Grncarov 79)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 14,766. **Ref:** Paixao (Por)
Norway: Knudsen - Hoiland, Waehler, Hangeland, J A Riise, B H Riise, Hauger, Grindheim (Winsnes 71), Gamst Pedersen, Helstad (Moldskred 76), Carew (Braaten 84).
Macedonia: Pacovski - Sedloski, I Mitreski, Grncarov, Popov, Sumulikoski, Georgievski, Stojkov (Ibraimi 60), Tasevski (Alimi 65), Naumoski (Ivanovski 75), Pandev.

Sep 9 - Glasgow
Scotland 0
Holland 1 (Elia 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 51,230. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, McManus, Weir, Whittaker, Brown, D Fletcher, Hartley (Commons 67), Naismith, K Miller, Maloney (O'Connor 82).
Holland: Vorm - Van der Wiel, Mathijsen, Ooijer, Van Bronckhorst, Van Persie (Huntelaar 85), De Jong, De Zeeuw, Sneijder (Van der Vaart 77), Robben (Elia 73), Kuijt.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP 9 – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland (Q)	8	8	0	0	17	2	24
Norway	8	2	4	2	9	7	10
Scotland	8	3	1	4	6	11	10
Macedonia	8	2	1	5	5	11	7
Iceland	8	1	2	5	7	13	5

Europe section play-off dates

1st legs - 14.11.09
2nd legs - 18.11.09

OCEANIA

(0.5 finals places)

2nd stage

As group winners, New Zealand will meet the fifth-best Asian country, Bahrain, in a two-leg play-off for a place in the finals

WC QUALS: OCEANIA – 2ND STAGE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
New Zealand	6	5	0	1	14	5	15
New Caledonia	6	2	2	2	12	10	8
Fiji	6	2	1	3	8	11	7
Vanuatu	6	1	1	4	5	13	4

17.10.07	Fiji-New Zealand	0-2
17.11.07	Fiji-New Caledonia	3-3
17.11.07	Vanuatu-New Zealand	1-2
21.11.07	New Caledonia-Fiji	4-0
21.11.07	New Zealand-Vanuatu	4-1
14.06.08	Vanuatu-New Caledonia	1-1
21.06.08	New Caledonia-Vanuatu	3-0
06.09.08	Fiji-Vanuatu	2-0
06.09.08	New Caledonia-New Zealand	1-3
10.09.08	New Zealand-New Caledonia	3-0
10.09.08	Vanuatu-Fiji	2-1
19.11.08	New Zealand-Fiji	0-2

Asia/Oceania play-off

10.10.09	Bahrain-New Zealand
14.11.09	New Zealand-Bahrain

SOUTH AMERICA

(4.5 finals places)

Top four qualify for the finals. The fifth-placed country will meet the fourth-placed CONCACAF country in a two-leg play-off for a place in the finals

Sep 5 - Rosario
Argentina 1 (Datolo 65)
Brazil 3 (Luisao 23, Luis Fabiano 30, 67)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 37,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Argentina: Andujar - Zanetti, Dominguez, Otamendi, Heinze, M Rodriguez (Aguero 46), Veron, Mascherano, Datolo, Messi, Tevez (D Milito 68).
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Lucio, Luisao, Andre Santos, Felipe Melo, Gilberto Silva, Elano (Daniel Alves 68), Kaka, Robinho (Ramires 68), Luis Fabiano (Adriano 77).

Sep 5 - Santiago
Chile 2 (Vidal 11, Millar 53)
Venezuela 2 (Maldonado 34, Rey 45)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Chile: Bravo - Vidal, Medel, Jara, Cereceda (Orellana 46), Carmona (Millar 46), Isla, Fernandez, Sanchez, Suazo (Valdivia 61), Beausejour.
Venezuela: Vega - Chacon (Boada 67), Vizcarrondo, Rey, Granados, Lucena, Rincon, Di Giorgi (Vargas 75), Arango, Seijas (Moreno 65), Maldonado.

Sep 5 - Medellin
Colombia 2 (J Martinez 81, Gutierrez 90)
Ecuador 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 42,000. **Ref:** Pezzotta (Arg)
Colombia: Julio - L Perea, Cordoba, Yepes, Armero, Vargas (Viafara 44), Guarin, Zuniga (J Martinez 72), G Moreno, Falcao Garcia (Hernandez 53), Gutierrez.
Ecuador: Cevallos - Reasco, Hurtado, G Espinoza, W Ayovi, Castillo, Noboa, Mendez (Montero 88), Valencia, Benitez, C Tenorio (Palacios 23). *Sent off: Palacios 48min.*

Sep 5 - Asuncion
Paraguay 1 (Cabanas pen 45)
Bolivia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,094. **Ref:** Carrillo (Per)
Paraguay: Villar - Bonet, Veron, Da Silva, Morel, Martinez, Santana, Riveros, Ledesma (E Barreto 69), Cabanas (O Cardozo 88), Haedo Valdez (E Benitez 75).
Bolivia: H Suarez - Palacios, Rodriguez, L Gutierrez, Parada, Bejarano, Flores (Pachi 53), Gomez, R Garcia (Vaca 82), Escobar (Cabrera 74), Martins.

Sep 5 - Lima
Peru 1 (Rengifo 85)
Uruguay 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Peru: Butron - Rodriguez, Zambrano, Vilchez, De la Haza (Prado 46), Ballon, Solano (R Torres 79), Palacios, Vargas, Chavez (Avila 10), Rengifo.
Uruguay: Castillo - Fucile, Lugano, Godin, A Pereira, Martinez (J Rodriguez 80), Eguren (A Fernandez 60), Gargano, C Rodriguez, Suarez, Abreu. *Sent off: Godin 89min.*

Sep 9 - La Paz
Bolivia 1 (Yecerotte 86)
Ecuador 3 (Mendez 3, Valencia 46, Benitez 56)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,200. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Bolivia: Suarez - Bejarano, Ribeiro, Rivero, Rodriguez, Flores (Reyes 46), R Garcia (H Gutierrez 64), L Gutierrez, Pachi, Cabrera (Yecerotte 51), Martins.
Ecuador: Elizaga - W Ayovi, G Espinoza (Guagua 61), Fleitas, Hurtado, Castillo, Mendez, Noboa, Valencia (Hidalgo 80), Benitez, Montero (Ambrossi 75).

Sep 9 - Salvador
Brazil 4 (Nilmar 31, 74, 76, Julio Baptista 40)
Chile 2 (Suazo pen 45, 52)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Miranda, Luisao, Andre Santos (Elano 70), Gilberto Silva, Felipe Melo, Daniel Alves, Julio Baptista (Sandro 68), Nilmar, Adriano (Diego Tardelli 68). *Sent off: Felipe Melo 50min.*
Chile: Bravo - Medel, Vidal (Cereceda 46), Ponce, Jara, Millar (Isla 68), Carmona, Fernandez, Sanchez, Suazo (Valdivia 68), Beausejour. *Sent off: Sanchez 77min.*

Sep 9 - Asuncion
Paraguay 1 (Haedo Valdez 27)
Argentina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,000. **Ref:** Fagundes (Bra)
Paraguay: Villar - Veron, J C Caceres, Da Silva, Torres, Vera, Santana (Ledesma 67), Riveros, E Barreto (V Caceres 81), Cabanas, Haedo Valdez (E Benitez 80).
Argentina: Romero - Zanetti, Dominguez (Schiavi 80), Heinze, Papa, Veron, Mascherano, Gago, Datolo (Lavezzi 46), Messi, Aguero (Palermo 59). *Sent off: Veron 52min.*

Sep 9 - Montevideo
Uruguay 3 (Suarez 6, Scotti 75, Eguren 87)
Colombia 1 (J Martinez 61)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Uruguay: Castillo - B Silva, Valdez, Caceres, A Pereira, Cavani (Scotti 32), Perez, Gargano, C Rodriguez (Eguren 81), Suarez (Abreu 90), Forlan. *Sent off: Valdez 29min.*
Colombia: Julio - L Perea, Cordoba, Yepes, Armero, Viafara (Hernandez 57), Guarin, Aguilar, Ramos (Pabon 81), G Moreno (J Martinez 57), Gutierrez. *Sent off: Gutierrez 46min.*

Sep 9 - Puerto La Cruz
Venezuela 3 (Fedor 33, 52, Vargas 71)
Peru 1 (Fuenmayor og 41)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 31,703. **Ref:** Vera (Ecu)
Venezuela: Vega - Boada, Vizcarrondo, Rey, Fuenmayor, Lucena, Seijas, Vargas, Arango (Di Giorgi 81), Fedor (Del Valle 83), Moreno (A Rondon 77).
Peru: Butron - Rodriguez, Prado, Ramos, Vilchez, Ballon, Solano (J Sanchez 69), Palacios, R Torres (Quinteros 68), Guerrero (Rengifo 14), Fano.

WC QUALS: SOUTH AMERICA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	16	9	6	1	32	9	33
Paraguay (Q)	16	9	3	4	22	13	30
Chile	16	8	3	5	27	20	27
Ecuador	16	6	5	5	21	23	23
Argentina	16	6	4	6	20	19	22
Uruguay	16	5	6	5	26	18	21
Venezuela	16	6	3	7	22	27	21
Colombia	16	5	5	6	10	14	20
Bolivia	16	3	3	10	20	34	12
Peru	16	2	4	10	9	32	10

Remaining games

10.10.09	Argentina-Peru
10.10.09	Bolivia-Brazil
10.10.09	Colombia-Chile
10.10.09	Ecuador-Uruguay
10.10.09	Venezuela-Paraguay
14.10.09	Brazil-Venezuela
14.10.09	Chile-Ecuador
14.10.09	Paraguay-Colombia
14.10.09	Peru-Bolivia
14.10.09	Uruguay-Argentina

CONCACAF/South America play-off

14.11.09	4th-placed CONCACAF country-5th-placed South American country
18.11.09	5th-placed South American country-4th-placed CONCACAF country

QUALIFIED FOR FINALS

(11 out of 32)
Australia
Brazil
England
Ghana
Holland
Japan
North Korea
Paraguay
South Africa (as hosts)
South Korea
Spain

● *Finals draw: December 4, 2009*

● *Finals to be held in South Africa from June 11 to July 11, 2010*

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Final qualifying round

In Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Aug 23
North Korea 9 (Kim Yong-jun 8, Pak Nam-chol 12, An Chol-hyok 20, 74, 78, 89, Choe Kum-chol 38, 41, Mun In-guk 45)
Guam 2 (Borja 1, Cunliffe 19)
HT: 6-2

Aug 23
Taiwan 0
Hong Kong 4 (Lee Wai-lim 39, Chan Wai-ho 45, Chan Siu-ki 61, Ambassa Guy 64)
HT: 0-2

Aug 25
Hong Kong 0
North Korea 0

Aug 25
Taiwan 4 (Chen Po-liang 49, 69, Chang Han 62, Lo Chih-en 75)
Guam 2 (Borja 6, 26)
HT: 0-2

Aug 27
Hong Kong 12 (Man Pei-tak 5, Wong Chin-hung 15, Chan Siu-ki 18, 35, 76, 77, Chao Pengfei 37, 70, 90, Leung Chun-pong 40, Poon Yiu-cheuk 87, Chan Wai-ho 88)
Guam 0
HT: 6-0

a temporary position as assistant manager of the national side following his retirement from the game.

The former Manchester United striker, who captained T&T at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, decided to end his playing career after being released by Premier League club Sunderland at the end of last season.

"I'll always count myself lucky," says the 37-year-old, who won 72 caps and scored 19 goals for his country since making his debut against Paraguay 20 years ago.

"I was a boy on a beach from a little Caribbean island that got the chance to fulfil his dream of winning trophies at the highest level and captaining his country in their first-ever World Cup finals.

"I hope people will say I played the game in the right way with a smile on my face."

UAE

Slovenian boss to start against Palestine

Srecko Katanec's first game in charge of the national side will be against Palestine on October 10.

WALES

Koumas calls it a day

Midfielder Jason Koumas quit international football just three days before the World Cup qualifier against Russia.

The Wigan Athletic player has struggled with hamstring problems and believes he can extend his club career by ending his involvement with the national team.

The 29-year-old made 34 appearances, scoring 10 goals, since his debut in June 2001 and his last appearance was in the 2-0 defeat by Finland earlier this year.

Club focus...Koumas

Aug 27
Taiwan 1 (Chang Han 49)
North Korea 2 (Jong Tae-se pen 22, Ji Yun-nam 61)
HT: 0-1

E ASIAN CH'SHIP – FINAL QUAL RND – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hong Kong	3	2	1	0	16	0	7
North Korea	3	2	1	0	11	3	7
Taiwan	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
Guam	3	0	0	3	4	25	0

Hong Kong qualify for the finals, to be staged in Japan in February next year and to which China, Japan and South Korea qualified automatically

NEHRU CUP

In New Delhi

Group stage

Aug 19
India 0
Lebanon 1 (Al Saadi 4)
HT: 0-1

Aug 20
Syria 2 (Al Zino 9, Alaga 72)
Kyrgyzstan 0
HT: 1-0
Sent off: Ablakimov (Kyrgyzstan) 67min

Aug 22
Sri Lanka 4 (Issadeen 6, 80, 88, Maduranga 83)
Lebanon 3 (Moghrabi 9, Al Saadi 45, Korhani pen 90)
HT: 1-2
Sent off: Moghrabi (Lebanon); Hettiarachchi (Sri Lanka)

Aug 23
India 2 (Bhutia 43, Chhetri pen 58)
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Murzaev 90)
HT: 1-0

Aug 24
Syria 4 (Al Zino 26, Al Hussain 33, Alaga 37, 55)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 3-0

Aug 25
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Zemlianuhin 48)
Lebanon 1 (Atwi 56)
HT: 0-0

Aug 26
India 3 (Bhutia 25, G Singh 69, Dias 85)
Sri Lanka 1 (Ruwanthilake 62)
HT: 1-0

Aug 27
Syria 1 (Al Zino 23)
Lebanon 0
HT: 1-0

Aug 28
Sri Lanka 1 (Maduranga 53)
Kyrgyzstan 4 (Zemlianuhin 34, Amirov 45, Murzaev 65, Usanov 70)
HT: 0-2

Aug 29
India 0
Syria 1 (Dyab 18)
HT: 0-1

NEHRU CUP – GROUP STAGE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	4	4	0	0	8	0	12
India	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Kyrgyzstan	4	1	1	2	6	6	4
Lebanon	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Sri Lanka	4	1	0	3	6	14	3

Top two qualified for Final

Final

Aug 31
Syria 1 (Dyab 119)
India 1 (R Singh 113)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0
India 5-4 on pens

BAHRAIN 3-NATION TOURNAMENT

In Manama

Aug 26
Bahrain 2 (Ali Ahmed 25, 44)
Kenya 1 (P Ochieng 43)
HT: 2-1

Aug 31
Bahrain 4 (Abdulrahman 12, Abdullatif 30, Isa 54, Adnan pen 90)
Iran 2 (Zandi 37, pen 83)
HT: 2-1

BAHRAIN 3-NATION TOURNAMENT – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Kenya	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Iran	1	0	0	1	2	4	0

The Kenya v Iran game was not played

FRIENDLIES

Sunday, August 16

Aug 16 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 0
Jamaica 1 (Hodges 55)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Willett (StK)
St Kitts & Nevis: Benjamin - V Jeffers, K Mitchum (O Mitchum 73), J Jeffers (Jones 56), S Isaac, K Saddler (O'Loughlin 82), Wigley, Lake, Gumbs (Elliott 88), A Saddler (Tishan Hanley 56), Clarke (Blanchette 81).
Jamaica: S Sawyers (Miller 60) - J Taylor, Dicoy Williams, Lewis, Edwards, Watson (A Campbell 74), Palmer, Simpson (Cousins 63), Woolery (E Taylor 78), Hodges (Keyes 76), Daley (M Campbell 65).

Friday, September 4

Sep 4 - Valletta
Malta 0
Cape Verde Islands 2 (H Ramos pen 15, Monteiro 40)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Banti (Ita)
Malta: Hogg (Haber 46) - Manny Muscat (A Agius 84), Said (Caruana 66), Fenech, Briffa, M Mifsud, Cohen, Failla, Schembri (S Bajada 46), Scicluna, Pace (Sammut 74).
Cape Verde Islands: F Tavares (Soares 90) - Cardoso (Moreno 79), Monteiro, O Ramos (Borges 66), Neves, Furtado, Aguiar (Duarte 71), Macedo, Arauso (Amado 32), Silva, H Ramos (Moreira 82).

Saturday, September 5

Sep 5 - Faro, Portugal
Angola 1 (Mangane og 66)
Senegal 1 (Niang 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Paixao (Por)
Angola: Lama - Joel, Kali, Kikas, Jamiana (Amaro 68), Xara (Kivuvu 67), Andre Macanga (Roger 67), Gilberto, Love (Manucho 46), Job (Djalma 46), Flavio.
Senegal: C T Ndiaye - Faty, Diawara, Mangane, Thioune, Tavarez (Diakhate 73), Sow, N D Ndiaye (D Ba 81), Gomis (Sall 90), Niang (M B Diouf 88), P D Cisse (Diallo 68).

Sep 5 - Wembley
England 2 (Lampard pen 31, Defoe 63)
Slovenia 1 (Ljubijankic 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 67,232. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
England: Green - Johnson, Terry, Upson (Lescott 64), A Cole, Lampard (Milner 46), Barry, Wright-Phillips (Lennon 46), Rooney (C Cole 80), Gerrard (Carrick 46), Heskey (Defoe 46).
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko, Suler, Cesar (Mavric 34), Jokic, Radosavljevic (Krhin 77), Koren, Kirm (Stevanovic 78), Birsa (Komac 65), Dedic (Pecnik 71), Novakovic (Ljubijankic 55).

Sep 5 - Leverkusen
Germany 2 (Gomez 35, Ozil 77)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 29,569. **Ref:** Circhetta (Swi)
Germany: Adler - Lahm, A Friedrich, Tasci (Westermann 46), Schafer, Ballack (Gentner 80), Rolfes (Khedira 73), Schweinsteiger (Trochowski 84), Ozil, Marin (Podolski 46), Gomez (Klose 46).
South Africa: Fernandez - Gaxa, Mokoena, Gould, Masilela, Fransman (Tshabalala 60), Mhlongo, Pienaar (Henyekane 83), Dikgacoi, Mphela (Van Heerden 84), Parker (Khenyeza 60).

Sep 5 - Enschede
Holland 3 (Van Persie 69, Sneijder 73, Huntelaar 87)
Japan 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 23,750. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Holland: Vorm (Velthuizen 46) - Van der Wiel, Loovens, Mathijsen, Van Bronckhorst, Van Persie, De Jong, Mendes da Silva (De Zeeuw 64), Sneijder (Van der Vaart 78), Robben (Elia 46), Kuijt (Huntelaar 64).
Japan: Kawashima - Uchida, Nakazawa, Tulio Tanaka, Nagatomo, S Nakamura, Endo, Hasebe, K Nakamura (Koroki 70), Okazaki, Tamada (Honda 46).

Sep 5 - Windhoek
Namibia 1 (Bester 28)
Swaziland 1 (Mthethwa 38)
HT: 1-1

Sep 5 - Seoul
South Korea 3 (Park Chu-young 4, Lee Jung-soo 20, Seol Ki-hyeon 86)
Australia 1 (Kisnorbo 33)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 40,215. **Ref:** Mohd Salleh (Mly)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Cho Yong-hyung, Lee Jung-soo, Lee Young-pyo, Kim Dong-jin, Ki Sung-yueng (Yeom Ki-hun 46), Lee Chung-yong (Kim Nam-il 70), Park Ji-sung, Kim Jung-woo (Cho Won-hee 46; Lee Seung-hyun 89), Park Chu-young (Lee Keun-ho 79), Lee Dong-gook (Seol Ki-hyeon 46).
Australia: Schwarzer - Kisnorbo, Milligan (Spiranovic 80), Stefanutto, North, Culina, Grella, Holman (Carle 59), Bresciano, McDonald, Kennedy.

Sep 5 - Kingstown
St Vincent & The Grenadines 0
St Kitts & Nevis 3 (Clarke 50, Tishan Hanley 55, A Saddler 81)
HT: 0-0

Sep 5 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 0
Iran 0
Att: 9,500. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Uzbekistan: Nesterov - Ibrahimov, Andreev, Haydarov, Polodin (Denisov 46), Ismailov (Kapadze 46), Gafurov, Djeparov, Geynrikh (Juraev 78), Ahmedov, Tadjiyev (Murzoev 65). *Sent off: Ahmedov 35min.*
Iran: Mehdi Rahmati - Nosrati (Talebi 46), Mohammad (Borhani 74), Aghili, Heydari, Zandi, Nekounam, Madanchi (Zarei 57), Shojaei, Hajsafy, Mobali. *Sent off: Zarei 60min.*

Tuesday, September 8

Sep 8 - Limerick
Republic of Ireland 1 (Lawrence 37)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,300. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Rep Ireland: Westwood - Kelly, St Ledger, McShane (O'Dea 62), Nolan, Lawrence, Gibson, Andrews, Keogh (Duff 78), Doyle (Best 59), Folan.
South Africa: Fernandez - Gaxa, Mokoena, Gould, Masilela (Thwala 78), Van Heerden (Khenyeza 59), Parker (Tshabalala 63), Dikgacoi (Ngobeni 81), Pienaar, Mhlongo, Mphela (Henyekane 74).

Wednesday, September 9

Sep 9 - Albufeira, Portugal
Angola 1 (Gilberto pen 23)
Cape Verde Islands 1 (Dario pen 35)
HT: 1-1
Angola: Lama - Joel, Enoque, Amaro, Kali, Kivuvu, Roger, Gilberto, Mabina, Flavio, Manucho.
Cape Verde Islands: Ernesto - Pele, Nhambu, Gege, Roni, Nando, Rodi, Dario, Moreira, Dady, Lito.

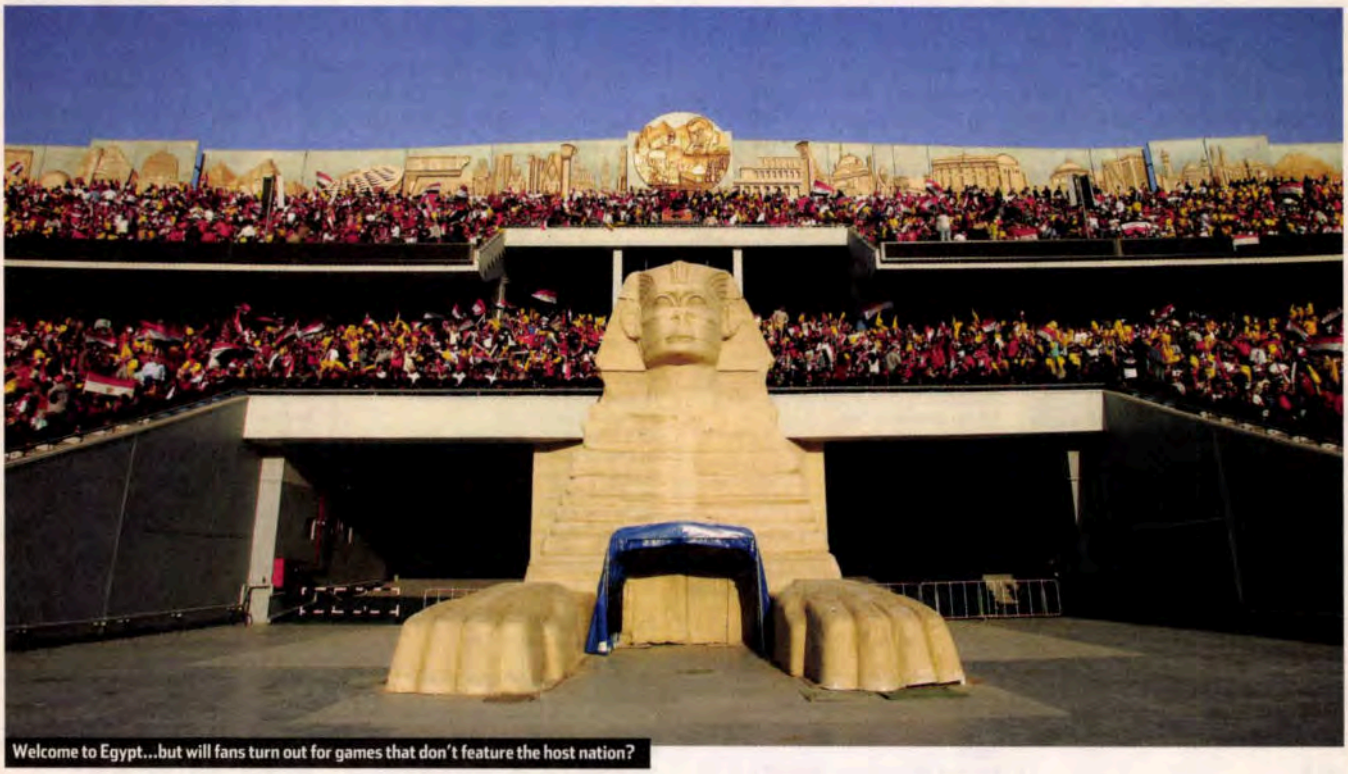
Sep 9 - Reykjavik
Iceland 3 (Johannsson 14, Skulason 18, V Gunnarsson pen 55)
Georgia 1 (Dvalishvili 33)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 4,726. **Ref:** Trefoloni (Ita)
Iceland: Gunnleifsson - Eiriksson (Palmason 46), I Sigurdsson, Steinsson (B Saevarsson 35), Skulason (Takefusa 84), K O Sigursson, Danielsson, S Gislason (D Vidarsson 84), Hallfredsson (B Sigurdsson 84), Johannsson (Bjornsson 75), V Gunnarsson.
Georgia: Mamaladze - Gongadze (Lobjanidze 73), Kashia, Kvakhadze, Popkhadze, Seturidze, Tskitishvili (Khmaladze 60), Razmadze, Gelashvili, Devdariani, Dvalishvili.

Sep 9 - Utrecht, Holland
Japan 4 (K Nakamura 53, Tamada 78, Okazaki 79, Inamoto 83)
Ghana 3 (Gyan pen 31, 47, M Amoah 66)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,506. **Ref:** Blom (Hol)
Japan: Tsuzuki - Komano, Nakazawa, Tulio Tanaka, Nagatomo, Hasebe (Inamoto 63), Endo, S Nakamura (Honda 69), K Nakamura (Abe 89), Maeda (Tamada 69), Okazaki (Koroki 84).
Ghana: Kingson (Amamoo 46) - Mensah (E Addo 46), Afful, Paintsil, Vorsah, Annan (Appiah 46), Essien, Muntari (Dickoh 86), Dramani (M Amoah 46), Kingston (Inkoom 74), Gyan.

Sep 9 - Amman
Jordan 1
New Zealand 3 (Smeltz pen 17, 65, Fallon 45)
HT: 1-2
New Zealand: Paston - Sigmund, Vicelich, Nelsen, Lochhead, McGlinchey (Scott 46), Brown, Elliott (Boyens 90), Bertos (Mulligan 76), Smeltz, Fallon (Barron 79). *Sent off: Vicelich 43min.*

Sep 9 - Doha
Qatar 1 (Afeef 44)
Oman 1 (Rabia 63)
HT: 1-0

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP Egypt awaits


Welcome to Egypt...but will fans turn out for games that don't feature the host nation?

LIONEL MESSI, Sergio Aguero, Luis Figo, Robert Prosinecki, Diego Maradona...the list of previous winners is a long and impressive one. However, it is extremely hard to predict who will emerge as the stars of this year's Under-20 World Cup – which is also referred to as the World Youth Cup – as, with the opening group games due to start on September 24, a number of competing countries are in dispute with clubs over the release of their players for the tournament in Egypt.

Atletico Madrid are unhappy about goalkeeper Sergio Asenjo representing Spain and Leandro Cabrera turning out for Uruguay, while Spain coach Luis Milla has already lost Barcelona starlet Bojan Krkic, who was ruled out through injury.

The English FA took a more conciliatory line, avoiding conflict with Premier League clubs by not calling up leading youngsters such as Jack Wilshere and Jack Rodwell. This means that Gavin Hoyte of Arsenal is the only player with regular Premier League experience in the England squad.

Future stars...Costa (left) and Giuliano

Coach Brian Eastick had never been confident of being able to select his strongest squad and admits: "It will be down to the clubs, but I do think that the players themselves are keen to come.

"We will just have to wait and see what reaction we get from the clubs and it's difficult to say at this moment which of these players we will get."

Brazil, the pre-tournament favourites in the absence of holders Argentina, will be without striker Walter and midfielder Sandro, two of the stars of their South American Under-20 success earlier this year. Walter was ruled out through injury but Sandro was left out of the squad at the request of his club, Internacional, who want him for the crucial Brazilian national championship run-in.

However, Brazil still have a number of promising players – including midfielders Douglas Costa, Giuliano and Paulo Henrique – and the South American champions will be one of the major attractions, though the organisers will struggle to repeat the success of the last tournament in Canada, which attracted record crowds.

All the matches, except the opening game and Final group games, are being played as double-headers in a bid to boost attendances. Nevertheless a repeat of the 2006 African Nations Cup, when crowds for matches not involving the hosts, Egypt, rarely rose above a few thousand, may be unavoidable.

Argentina, winners of five of the last

Holders...Argentina won in 2007

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1977 Soviet Union
1979 Argentina
1981 West Germany
1983 Brazil
1985 Brazil
1987 Yugoslavia
1989 Portugal
1991 Portugal
1993 Brazil
1995 Argentina
1997 Argentina
1999 Spain
2001 Argentina
2003 Brazil
2005 Argentina
2007 Argentina

One to watch...Uruguay's Hernandez

seven tournaments, will not be defending their crown, but a strong challenge is expected from Uruguay, whose impressive performance at the South American qualifying tournament was a factor in Argentina's absence. They will look to Palermo forward Abel Hernandez and Benfica winger Jonathan Urretavizcaya.

Nigeria will be without injured Macauley Chrisantus, top scorer at the 2007 Under-17 World Championship, but they, along with Ghana and Egypt, will lead the African challenge.

Despite Bojan's absence, Spain will have a strong squad, led by Dani Parejo (see Talent Scout, page 74), Arsenal midfielder Fran Merida and Zaragoza's Ander Herrera.

Germany, the reigning Euro Under-17, Under 19 and Under-21 champions will be looking to extend their run of success under coach Horst Hrubesch.

However, Czech Republic, the runners-up in Canada two years ago, may struggle for a repeat of 2007. Much will depend on whether they can persuade CSKA Moscow to release Tomas Necid.

Clubs, increasingly, hold the power over countries.

John Holmesdale

THE SCHEDULE (all kick-offs are local time)

GROUP A

Sep 24	Egypt-Trinidad and Tobago (Alexandria Army stadium, 2000)
Sep 25	Paraguay-Italy (Cairo International stadium, 1600)
Sep 28	Italy-Trinidad and Tobago (Cairo Int, 1845)
Sep 28	Egypt-Paraguay (Cairo Int, 2130)
Oct 1	Trinidad and Tobago-Paraguay (Cairo Al-Salam, 2130)
Oct 1	Italy-Egypt (Cairo Int, 2130)

GROUP B

Sep 25	Nigeria-Venezuela (Cairo Al-Salam, 1845)
Sep 25	Spain-Tahiti (Cairo Al-Salam, 2130)
Sep 28	Nigeria-Spain (Cairo Al-Salam, 1600)
Sep 28	Tahiti-Venezuela (Cairo Al-Salam, 1845)
Oct 1	Venezuela-Spain (Cairo Al-Salam, 1845)
Oct 1	Tahiti-Nigeria (Cairo Int, 1845)

GROUP C

Sep 26	USA-Germany (Suez, 1600)
Sep 26	Cameroon-South Korea (Suez, 1845)
Sep 29	South Korea-Germany (Suez, 1600)
Sep 29	USA-Cameroon (Suez, 1845)
Oct 2	Germany-Cameroon (Ismailia, 1845)
Oct 2	South Korea-USA (Suez, 1845)

GROUP D

Sep 26	Ghana-Uzbekistan (Ismailia, 1845)
Sep 26	England-Uruguay (Ismailia, 2130)
Sep 29	Uruguay-Uzbekistan (Ismailia, 1845)
Sep 29	Ghana-England (Ismailia, 2130)
Oct 2	Uruguay-Ghana (Ismailia, 2130)
Oct 2	Uzbekistan-England (Suez, 2130)

GROUP E

Sep 27	Brazil-Costa Rica (Port Said, 1600)
Sep 27	Czech Republic-Australia (Port Said, 1845)
Sep 30	Australia-Costa Rica (Port Said, 1600)
Sep 30	Brazil-Czech Republic (Port Said, 1845)
Oct 3	Costa Rica-Czech Republic (Alexandria, 2130)
Oct 3	Australia-Brazil (Port Said, 2130)

GROUP F

Sep 27	United Arab Emirates-South Africa (Alexandria, 1845)
Sep 27	Honduras-Hungary (Alexandria, 2130)
Sep 30	Hungary-South Africa (Alexandria, 1845)
Sep 30	United Arab Emirates-Honduras (Alexandria, 2130)
Oct 3	Hungary-United Arab Emirates (Alexandria, 1845)
Oct 3	South Africa-Honduras (Port Said, 1845)

ROUND OF 16

1	Oct 5	Gp B 1st v Gp A, C or D 3rd (Cairo Al Salam, 1630)
2	Oct 5	Gp A 2nd v Gp C 2nd (Cairo Int, 2000)
3	Oct 6	Gp D 1st v Gp B, E or F 3rd (Ismailia, 1630)
4	Oct 6	Gp A 1st v Gp C, D or E 3rd (Cairo Int, 2000)
5	Oct 6	Gp F 1st v Gp E 2nd (Alexandria, 2000)
6	Oct 7	Gp E 1st v Gp D 2nd (Part Said, 1630)
7	Oct 7	Gp B 2nd v Gp F 2nd (Suez, 1630)
8	Oct 7	Gp C 1st v Gp A, B or F 3rd (Suez, 2000)

QUARTER-FINALS

Oct 9	winner 2 v winner 3 (QF1) (Suez, 1630)
Oct 9	winner 1 v winner 5 (QF2) (Suez, 2000)
Oct 10	winner 6 v winner 8 (QF3) (Cairo Int, 1630)
Oct 10	winner 7 v winner 4 (QF4) (Cairo Int, 2000)

SEMI-FINALS

Oct 13	QF1 v QF2 (Cairo Int, 1630)
Oct 13	QF3 v QF4 (Cairo Int, 2000)

3RD PLACE

Oct 16 (Cairo Int, 1700)

FINAL

Oct 16 (Cairo Int, 2000)

Final venue...Cairo International Stadium

PEOPLE in the news

Gourlay replaces Kenyon at Chelsea

Bridge control...Gourlay

EUROPE

Chelsea promoted chief operating officer RON GOURLAY to the post of chief executive following the resignation of PETER KENYON. Like Kenyon, Gourlay previously worked for Manchester United and sportswear company Umbro. Kenyon will continue as a non-executive director of Chelsea.

Attacked...Davenport

County man...Campbell

Former Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal and Portsmouth centre-half SOL CAMPBELL, 34, joined English fourth-tier side Notts County, where his ex-England boss Sven Goran Eriksson is director of football.

West Ham United defender CALUM DAVENPORT underwent emergency surgery after he was stabbed in both legs in an attack at his mother's home.

Latvia Under-21 coach GENADIJS SITIKS passed away, aged 51. During his career he made over 400 appearances for Daugava Riva and was regarded as one of his country's greatest midfielders.

Skipper...De La Pena

Espanyol named long-serving midfielder IVAN DE LA PENA as their new captain following the death of DANIEL JARQUE, who suffered a fatal heart attack during the club's pre-season tour of Italy this summer.

VIRGINIO DE PAOLI died, following a long illness, aged 71. The former Juventus striker won three caps for Italy.

ALASTAIR JOHNSTON, a director at Ibrox for five years, replaced DAVID MURRAY as chairman of reigning Scottish Premier League champions Rangers.

CRISTIANO BERGODI was sacked as coach of Steaua Bucharest following a reported argument with owner Gigi Becali in the dressing room at half-time during the Europa League group match against Sheriff Tiraspol. Former Steaua and Kuwait national team coach MIHAI STOICHITA was named as Bergodi's replacement.

Former FC Zenit St Petersburg coach DICK ADVOCAAT will be in charge of Belgium's last two World Cup qualifiers after agreeing to take up the post three months earlier than originally planned.

AMERICAS

Mexico striker GUILLERMO FRANCO joined English club West Ham United on a free transfer after his contract with Villarreal of Spain expired during the summer.

Gone home...De Guzman

Canada midfielder JULIAN DE GUZMAN, who has won 40 caps for his country, joined home-town team Toronto, having previously spent his entire professional career in Europe, where he played for Saarbrucken and Hannover in Germany and Deportivo La Coruna of Spain.

ASIA

Coach LEE JAN-SOO was sacked by Chinese Super League contenders Beijing Guoan. The 52-year-old, who won the Chinese Cup with Qingdao in 2002, has been temporarily replaced by HONG YUANSHOU.

Reward...Park

Manchester United's PARK JI-SUNG signed a new contract with the Premier League side. The 28-year-old's two-year deal makes him the highest-paid Korean player of all time.

Former Serbia international, ALEKSANDAR ZIVKOVIC was sacked by Chinese champions Shandong Luneng for spitting at the referee during the league match with Qingdao.

OCEANIA

Australia's national team captain LUCAS NEILL signed a one-year contract with Everton after being released by fellow Premier League club West Ham United in the summer.

New club...Neill

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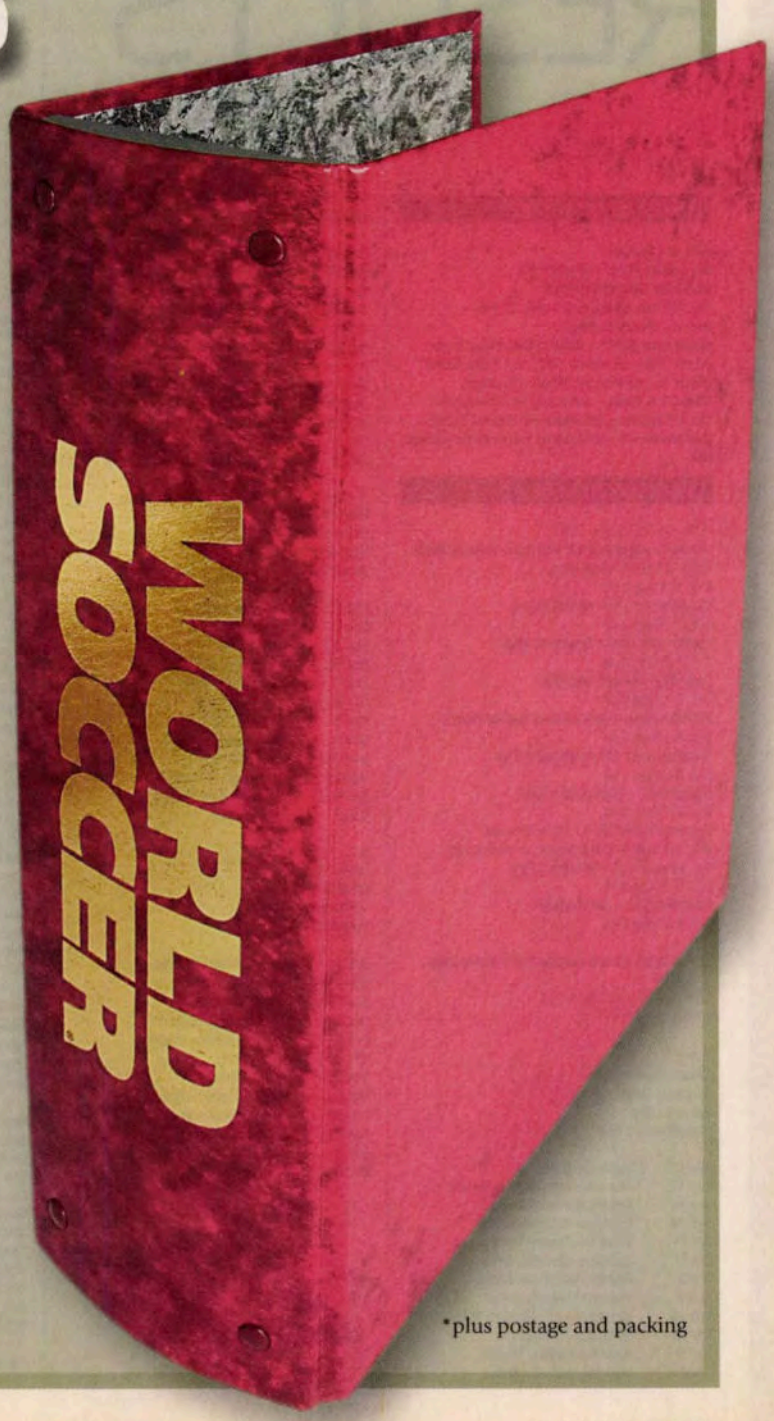

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Injured...Okotie

AUSTRIA

Okotie out until 2010

Austria Wien striker Rubin Okotie will be sidelined for the rest of the year after suffering knee cartilage damage in his right leg during his side's 3-2 Europa League victory at home to Metalurh Donetsk.

The 22-year-old Pakistan-born Austria international had scored four goals in his first four league games this season.

BELARUS

Gurenko gets first job

Former international defender Sergei Gurenko has been handed his first coaching post.

The 36-year-old, who won 80 caps for his country, took over from Kirill Alshevskiy and becomes Dinamo Minsk's third coach of the season.

Missing...Defour

BELGIUM

Standard absence

Standard Liege skipper Steven Defour misses his club's entire Champions League Group H campaign after fracturing a bone in his right foot in the 3-0 league victory over Mechelen.

The reigning Belgian champions have bolstered their squad, however, with the signing of Portuguese

RESULTS

EUROPE

EUROPEAN SUPER CUP

Aug 28 - Monaco
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Pedro 115)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 0
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 0-0. **Att:** 17,738.
Ref: De Bleeckere (Blg)
Barcelona: Valdes - Daniel Alves, Pique, Puyol, Abidal, Toure (Busquets 100), Xavi, Keita, Henry (Bojan 96), Ibrahimovic (Pedro 81), Messi.
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Kucher, Chygrynskyi, Rat, Hubschman, Gai (Kobin 80), Ilsinho, Willian (Aghahowa 91), Luiz Adriano, Fernandinho (Jadson 80).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

4th qualifying round

1st legs - August 18/19; 2nd legs - August 25/26
Celtic (Sco) v Arsenal (Eng)
0-2, 1-3 (agg 1-5)
Copenhagen (Den) v APOEL (Cyp)
1-0, 1-3 (agg 2-3)
Levski Sofia (Bul) v Debrecen (Hun)
1-2, 0-2 (agg 1-4)
Lyon (Fra) v Anderlecht (Blg)
5-1, 3-1 (agg 8-2)
Panathinaikos (Gre) v Atletico Madrid (Spa)
2-3, 0-2 (agg 2-5)
Salzburg (Aut) v Maccabi Haifa (Isr)
1-2, 0-3 (agg 1-5)
Sheriff (Mol) v Olympiakos (Gre)
0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)
Sporting Lisbon (Por) v Fiorentina (Ita)
2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3; Fiorentina on away goals)
Timisoara (Rom) v Stuttgart (Ger)
0-2, 0-0 (agg 0-2)
Ventspils (Lat) v Zurich (Swi)
0-3, 1-2 (agg 1-5)

Losers enter Europa League at the group stage

Group stage draw & match schedule

Group A
Bayern Munich (Ger)
Bordeaux (Fra)
Juventus (Ita)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr)

Sep 15	Juventus-Bordeaux
Sep 15	Maccabi Haifa-Bayern Munich
Sep 30	Bayern Munich-Juventus
Sep 30	Bordeaux-Maccabi Haifa
Oct 21	Bordeaux-Bayern Munich
Oct 21	Juventus-Maccabi Haifa
Nov 3	Bayern Munich-Bordeaux
Nov 3	Maccabi Haifa-Juventus
Nov 25	Bayern Munich-Maccabi Haifa
Nov 25	Bordeaux-Juventus
Dec 8	Juventus-Bayern Munich
Dec 8	Maccabi Haifa-Bordeaux

Group B
Besiktas (Tur)
CSKA Moscow (Rus)
Manchester United (Eng)
Wolfsburg (Ger)

Sep 15	Besiktas-Manchester United
Sep 15	Wolfsburg-CSKA Moscow
Sep 30	CSKA Moscow-Besiktas
Sep 30	Manchester United-Wolfsburg
Oct 21	CSKA Moscow-Manchester United
Oct 21	Wolfsburg-Besiktas
Nov 3	Besiktas-Wolfsburg
Nov 3	Manchester United-CSKA Moscow
Nov 25	CSKA Moscow-Wolfsburg
Nov 25	Manchester United-Besiktas
Dec 8	Besiktas-CSKA Moscow
Dec 8	Wolfsburg-Manchester United

Group C
Marseille (Fra)
Milan (Ita)
Real Madrid (Spa)
Zurich (Swi)

Sep 15	Marseille-Milan
Sep 15	Zurich-Real Madrid
Sep 30	Milan-Zurich
Sep 30	Real Madrid-Marseille
Oct 21	Real Madrid-Milan
Oct 21	Zurich-Marseille
Nov 3	Marseille-Zurich
Nov 3	Milan-Real Madrid
Nov 25	Milan-Marseille
Nov 25	Real Madrid-Zurich
Dec 8	Marseille-Real Madrid
Dec 8	Zurich-Milan

Group D
APOEL (Cyp)
Atletico Madrid (Spa)
Chelsea (Eng)
Porto (Por)

Sep 15	Atletico Madrid-APOEL
Sep 15	Chelsea-Porto
Sep 30	APOEL-Chelsea
Sep 30	Porto-Atletico Madrid
Oct 21	Chelsea-Atletico Madrid
Oct 21	Porto-APOEL
Nov 3	APOEL-Porto
Nov 3	Atletico Madrid-Chelsea
Nov 25	APOEL-Atletico Madrid
Nov 25	Porto-Chelsea
Dec 8	Atletico Madrid-Porto
Dec 8	Chelsea-APOEL

Group E
Debrecen (Hun)
Fiorentina (Ita)
Liverpool (Eng)
Lyon (Fra)

Sep 16	Liverpool-Debrecen
Sep 16	Lyon-Fiorentina
Sep 29	Debrecen-Lyon
Sep 29	Fiorentina-Liverpool
Oct 20	Debrecen-Fiorentina
Oct 20	Liverpool-Lyon
Nov 4	Fiorentina-Debrecen
Nov 4	Lyon-Liverpool
Nov 24	Debrecen-Liverpool
Nov 24	Fiorentina-Lyon
Dec 9	Liverpool-Fiorentina
Dec 9	Lyon-Debrecen

Group F
Barcelona (Spa)
Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr)
Internazionale (Ita)
Rubin Kazan (Rus)

Sep 16	Dynamo Kyiv-Rubin Kazan
Sep 16	Internazionale-Barcelona
Sep 29	Barcelona-Dynamo Kyiv
Sep 29	Rubin Kazan-Internazionale
Oct 20	Barcelona-Rubin Kazan
Oct 20	Internazionale-Dynamo Kyiv
Nov 4	Dynamo Kyiv-Internazionale
Nov 4	Rubin Kazan-Barcelona
Nov 24	Barcelona-Internazionale
Nov 24	Rubin Kazan-Dynamo Kyiv
Dec 9	Dynamo Kyiv-Barcelona
Dec 9	Internazionale-Rubin Kazan

Group G
Rangers (Sco)
Sevilla (Spa)
Stuttgart (Ger)
Urziceni (Rom)

Sep 16	Sevilla-Urziceni
Sep 16	Stuttgart-Rangers
Sep 29	Rangers-Sevilla
Sep 29	Urziceni-Stuttgart
Oct 20	Rangers-Urziceni
Oct 20	Stuttgart-Sevilla
Nov 4	Sevilla-Stuttgart
Nov 4	Urziceni-Rangers
Nov 24	Rangers-Stuttgart
Nov 24	Urziceni-Sevilla
Dec 9	Sevilla-Rangers
Dec 9	Stuttgart-Urziceni

Group H
Arsenal (Eng)
AZ Alkmaar (Hol)
Olympiakos (Gre)
Standard Liege (Blg)

Sep 16	Olympiakos-AZ Alkmaar
Sep 16	Standard Liege-Arsenal
Sep 29	Arsenal-Olympiakos
Sep 29	AZ Alkmaar-Standard Liege
Oct 20	AZ Alkmaar-Arsenal
Oct 20	Olympiakos-Standard Liege
Nov 4	Arsenal-AZ Alkmaar
Nov 4	Standard Liege-Olympiakos
Nov 24	Arsenal-Standard Liege
Nov 24	AZ Alkmaar-Olympiakos
Dec 9	Olympiakos-Arsenal
Dec 9	Standard Liege-AZ Alkmaar

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round

EUROPA LEAGUE

4th qualifying round

1st legs - August 20; 2nd legs - August 25/27
Ajax (Hol) v Slovan Bratislava (Slk)
5-0, 2-1 (agg 7-1)
Athletic Bilbao (Spa) v Tromso (Nor)
3-2, 1-1 (agg 4-3)
FK Baku (Aze) v Basle (Swi)
1-3, 1-5 (agg 2-8)
BATE Borisov (Bls) v Litex Lovech (Bul)
0-1, 4-0 (aet) (agg 4-1)
Benfica (Por) v Vorskla (Ukr)
4-0, 1-2 (agg 5-2)
Bnei Yehuda (Isr) v PSV Eindhoven (Hol)
0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2)
Brondby (Den) v Hertha Berlin (Ger)
2-1, 1-3 (agg 3-4)
CSKA Sofia (Bul) v Dynamo Moscow (Rus)
0-0, 2-1 (agg 2-1)
Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) v Slovan Liberec (Cze)
0-3*, 3-0 (aet) (agg 3-3; Dinamo 9-8 on pens)
**1st leg awarded 3-0 to Liberec, who had been leading 2-0 when Dinamo fans invaded the pitch with two minutes to play*
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) v Hearts (Sco)
4-0, 0-2 (agg 4-2)
Everton (Eng) v Sigma Olomouc (Cze)
4-0, 1-1 (agg 5-1)
Fulham (Eng) v Amkar Perm (Rus)
3-1, 0-1 (agg 3-2)
Galatasaray (Tur) v Levadia Tallinn (Est)
5-0, 1-1 (agg 6-1)
Genk (Blg) v Lille (Fra)
1-2, 2-4 (agg 3-6)
Genoa (Ita) v OB Odense (Den)
3-1, 1-1 (agg 4-2)
Guingamp (Fra) v Hamburg (Ger)
1-5, 1-3 (agg 2-8)
Kosice (Slk) v Roma (Ita)
3-3, 1-7 (agg 4-10)
Lazio (Ita) v Elfsborg (Swe)
3-0, 0-1 (agg 3-1)
Lech Poznan (Pol) v Club Brugge (Blg)
1-0, 0-1 (aet) (agg 1-1; Club Brugge 4-3 on pens)
Maribor (Sln) v Sparta Prague (Cze)
0-2, 0-1 (agg 0-3)
Metalurh Donetsk (Ukr) v Austria Wien (Aut)
2-2, 2-3 (aet) (agg 4-5)
NAC Breda (Hol) v Villarreal (Spa)
1-3, 1-6 (agg 2-9)
Nacional (Por) v Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)
4-3, 1-1 (agg 5-4)
PAOK Salonika (Gre) v Heerenveen (Hol)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1; Heerenveen on away goals)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser) v Zilina (Slk)
1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1)
Rapid Wien (Aut) v Aston Villa (Eng)
1-0, 1-2 (agg 2-2; Rapid Wien on away goals)
Sarajevo (Bos) v CFR Cluj (Rom)
1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3)
Sion (Swi) v Fenerbahce (Tur)
0-2, 2-2 (agg 2-4)
Sivasspor (Tur) v Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)
0-3, 0-2 (agg 0-5)
Slavia Prague (Cze) v Red Star Belgrade (Ser)
3-0, 1-2 (agg 4-2)
Stabaek (Nor) v Valencia (Spa)
0-3, 1-4 (agg 1-7)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) v St Patrick's (Ire)
3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1)
Sturm Graz (Aut) v Metalist (Ukr)
1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
Teplice (Cze) v Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr)
1-2, 1-1 (agg 2-3)
Trabzonspor (Tur) v Toulouse (Fra)
1-3, 1-0 (agg 2-3)

defender Ricardo Rocha, who was released by Tottenham Hotspur in June.

Elsewhere, Charleroi agreed a two-year deal with prolific Oman striker Amad Al Hosni, who joins from Qatari club Al Rayyan.

BULGARIA

Stoilov stands down

National coach Stanimir Stoilov quit his club job with Litex Lovech after failing to guide them into the Europa League group stage.

CROATIA

Cosmopolitan approach works for Dinamo

Former Argentina international Leandro Cufre became Dinamo Zagreb's 10th foreign recruit when he joined the Croatian champions from Monaco, following a spell on loan at Hertha Berlin last season.

The 31-year-old defender becomes the club's seventh South American – a contingent which includes Chile midfielder Pedro Morales, who scored seven goals in Dinamo's first seven league games.

CYPRUS

Solomou too late

APOEL Nicosia, who beat Copenhagen to reach the group stage of the Champions League for the first time in their history, have signed Cyprus international Athos Solomou on a free transfer.

However, the 23-year-old former Apollon Limassol midfielder – who has signed a three-year contract and been capped twice by his country – will not be able to play for his new club in Europe this autumn, having signed after the competition deadline.

Not registered...Solomou

Twente Enschede (Hol) v Karabakh (Aze)
3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1)
Vaslui (Rom) v AEK Athens (Gre)
2-1, 0-3 (agg 2-4)
Werder Bremen (Ger) v Aktobe (Kaz)
6-3, 2-0 (agg 8-3)

Group stage draw & match schedule

Losing teams from the Champions League 4th qualifying round entered at this stage

Group A

Ajax (Hol)
Anderlecht (Blg)
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro)
Timisoara (Rom)

Sep 17	Ajax-Timisoara
Sep 17	Dinamo Zagreb-Anderlecht
Oct 1	Anderlecht-Ajax
Oct 1	Timisoara-Dinamo Zagreb
Oct 22	Ajax-Dinamo Zagreb
Oct 22	Timisoara-Anderlecht
Nov 5	Anderlecht-Timisoara
Nov 5	Dinamo Zagreb-Ajax
Dec 2	Anderlecht-Dinamo Zagreb
Dec 2	Timisoara-Ajax
Dec 17	Ajax-Anderlecht
Dec 17	Dinamo Zagreb-Timisoara

Group B

Genoa (Ita)
Lille (Fra)
Slavia Prague (Cze)
Valencia (Spa)

Sep 17	Genoa-Slavia Prague
Sep 17	Lille-Valencia
Oct 1	Slavia Prague-Lille
Oct 1	Valencia-Genoa
Oct 22	Lille-Genoa
Oct 22	Valencia-Slavia Prague
Nov 5	Genoa-Lille
Nov 5	Slavia Prague-Valencia
Dec 2	Slavia Prague-Genoa
Dec 2	Valencia-Lille
Dec 17	Genoa-Valencia
Dec 17	Lille-Slavia Prague

Group C

Celtic (Sco)
Hamburg (Ger)
Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr)
Rapid Wien (Aut)

Sep 17	Hapoel Tel Aviv-Celtic
Sep 17	Rapid Wien-Hamburg
Oct 1	Celtic-Rapid Wien
Oct 1	Hamburg-Hapoel Tel Aviv
Oct 22	Celtic-Hamburg
Oct 22	Hapoel Tel Aviv-Rapid Wien
Nov 5	Hamburg-Celtic
Nov 5	Rapid Wien-Hapoel Tel Aviv
Dec 2	Celtic-Hapoel Tel Aviv
Dec 2	Hamburg-Rapid Wien
Dec 17	Hapoel Tel Aviv-Hamburg
Dec 17	Rapid Wien-Celtic

Group D

Heerenveen (Hol)
Hertha Berlin (Ger)
Sporting Lisbon (Por)
Ventspils (Lat)

Sep 17	Heerenveen-Sporting Lisbon
Sep 17	Hertha Berlin-Ventspils
Oct 1	Sporting Lisbon-Hertha Berlin
Oct 1	Ventspils-Heerenveen
Oct 22	Hertha Berlin-Heerenveen
Oct 22	Ventspils-Sporting Lisbon
Nov 5	Heerenveen-Hertha Berlin
Nov 5	Sporting Lisbon-Ventspils
Dec 3	Sporting Lisbon-Heerenveen
Dec 3	Ventspils-Hertha Berlin
Dec 16	Heerenveen-Ventspils
Dec 16	Hertha Berlin-Sporting Lisbon

Group E

Basle (Swi)
CSKA Sofia (Bul)
Fulham (Eng)
Roma (Ita)

Sep 17	Basle-Roma
Sep 17	CSKA Sofia-Fulham
Oct 1	Fulham-Basle
Oct 1	Roma-CSKA Sofia
Oct 22	CSKA Sofia-Basle
Oct 22	Fulham-Roma
Nov 5	Basle-CSKA Sofia
Nov 5	Roma-Fulham
Dec 3	Fulham-CSKA Sofia
Dec 3	Roma-Basle
Dec 16	Basle-Fulham
Dec 16	CSKA Sofia-Roma

Group F

Dinamo Bucharest (Rom)
Galatasaray (Tur)
Panathinaikos (Gre)
Sturm Graz (Aut)

Sep 17	Panathinaikos-Galatasaray
Sep 17	Sturm Graz-Dinamo Bucharest
Oct 1	Dinamo Bucharest-Panathinaikos
Oct 1	Galatasaray-Sturm Graz
Oct 22	Galatasaray-Dinamo Bucharest
Oct 22	Panathinaikos-Sturm Graz
Nov 5	Dinamo Bucharest-Galatasaray
Nov 5	Sturm Graz-Panathinaikos
Dec 3	Dinamo Bucharest-Sturm Graz
Dec 3	Galatasaray-Panathinaikos
Dec 16	Panathinaikos-Dinamo Bucharest
Dec 16	Sturm Graz-Galatasaray

Group G

Lazio (Ita)
Levski Sofia (Bul)
Salzburg (Aut)
Villarreal (Spa)

Sep 17	Lazio-Salzburg
Sep 17	Villarreal-Levski Sofia
Oct 1	Levski Sofia-Lazio
Oct 1	Salzburg-Villarreal
Oct 22	Lazio-Villarreal
Oct 22	Salzburg-Levski Sofia
Nov 5	Levski Sofia-Salzburg
Nov 5	Villarreal-Lazio
Dec 2	Levski Sofia-Villarreal
Dec 2	Salzburg-Lazio
Dec 17	Lazio-Levski Sofia
Dec 17	Villarreal-Salzburg

Group H

Fenerbahce (Tur)
Sheriff (Mol)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Twente Enschede (Hol)

Sep 17	Fenerbahce-Twente Enschede
Sep 17	Steaua Bucharest-Sheriff
Oct 1	Sheriff-Fenerbahce
Oct 1	Twente Enschede-Steaua Bucharest
Oct 22	Sheriff-Twente Enschede
Oct 22	Steaua Bucharest-Fenerbahce
Nov 5	Fenerbahce-Steaua Bucharest
Nov 5	Twente Enschede-Sheriff
Dec 2	Sheriff-Steaua Bucharest
Dec 2	Twente Enschede-Fenerbahce
Dec 17	Fenerbahce-Sheriff
Dec 17	Steaua Bucharest-Twente Enschede

Group I

AEK Athens (Gre)
BATE Borisov (Bls)
Benfica (Por)
Everton (Eng)

Sep 17	Benfica-BATE Borisov
Sep 17	Everton-AEK Athens
Oct 1	AEK Athens-Benfica
Oct 1	BATE Borisov-Everton
Oct 22	BATE Borisov-AEK Athens
Oct 22	Benfica-Everton
Nov 5	AEK Athens-BATE Borisov
Nov 5	Everton-Benfica
Dec 2	AEK Athens-Everton
Dec 2	BATE Borisov-Benfica
Dec 17	Benfica-AEK Athens
Dec 17	Everton-BATE Borisov

Group J

Club Brugge (Blg)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)
Toulouse (Fra)

Sep 17	Club Brugge-Shakhtar Donetsk
Sep 17	Partizan Belgrade-Toulouse
Oct 1	Shakhtar Donetsk-Partizan Belgrade
Oct 1	Toulouse-Club Brugge
Oct 22	Club Brugge-Partizan Belgrade
Oct 22	Shakhtar Donetsk-Toulouse
Nov 5	Partizan Belgrade-Club Brugge
Nov 5	Toulouse-Shakhtar Donetsk
Dec 3	Shakhtar Donetsk-Club Brugge
Dec 3	Toulouse-Partizan Belgrade
Dec 16	Club Brugge-Toulouse
Dec 16	Partizan Belgrade-Shakhtar Donetsk

Group K

CFR Cluj (Rom)
Copenhagen (Den)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol)
Sparta Prague (Cze)

Sep 17	CFR Cluj-Copenhagen
Sep 17	Sparta Prague-PSV Eindhoven
Oct 1	Copenhagen-Sparta Prague
Oct 1	PSV Eindhoven-CFR Cluj
Oct 22	PSV Eindhoven-Copenhagen
Oct 22	Sparta Prague-CFR Cluj
Nov 5	CFR Cluj-Sparta Prague
Nov 5	Copenhagen-PSV Eindhoven
Dec 3	Copenhagen-CFR Cluj
Dec 3	PSV Eindhoven-Sparta Prague
Dec 16	CFR Cluj-PSV Eindhoven
Dec 16	Sparta Prague-Copenhagen

Group L

Athletic Bilbao (Spa)
Austria Wien (Aut)
Nacional (Por)
Werder Bremen (Ger)

Sep 17	Athletic Bilbao-Austria Wien
Sep 17	Nacional-Werder Bremen
Oct 1	Austria Wien-Nacional
Oct 1	Werder Bremen-Athletic Bilbao
Oct 22	Athletic Bilbao-Nacional
Oct 22	Austria Wien-Werder Bremen
Nov 5	Nacional-Athletic Bilbao
Nov 5	Werder Bremen-Austria Wien
Dec 3	Austria Wien-Athletic Bilbao
Dec 3	Werder Bremen-Nacional
Dec 16	Athletic Bilbao-Werder Bremen
Dec 16	Nacional-Austria Wien

Top two in each group qualify for 1st knockout round, to which the third-placed sides from the eight Champions League groups will also qualify

AUSTRIA

Aug 21: Austria Karnten 0 Ried 0.
Aug 22: Wiener Neustadt 1 Salzburg 1.
Aug 23: Sturm 0 Austria Wien 1; Kapfenberger 0 Mattersburg 1; Rapid Wien 4 LASK 1.
Aug 28: Mattersburg 4 Austria Karnten 1.
Aug 29: Salzburg 4 Kapfenberger 0.
Aug 30: Austria Wien 1 Rapid Wien 1; Ried 1 Sturm 2; LASK 4 Wiener Neustadt 2.
Sep 12: Mattersburg 3 Ried 0; Sturm 3 LASK 3; Wiener Neustadt 2 Kapfenberger 3; Austria Karnten 2 Austria Wien 1.
Sep 13: Rapid 2 Salzburg 2.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	7	4	2	1	15	9	14
Sturm	6	4	1	1	13	6	13
Austria Wien	7	4	1	2	14	10	13
Mattersburg	7	4	0	3	12	11	12
LASK	7	3	1	3	22	17	10
Rapid	6	2	3	1	14	8	9
Ried	7	2	2	3	5	8	8
W Neustadt	7	2	1	4	11	15	7
Kapfenberger	7	2	0	5	6	17	6
A Karnten	7	1	1	5	8	19	4

BELGIUM

Aug 21: Standard 1 Charleroi 1.
Aug 22: St Truiden 2 Roeselare 1; Zulte Waregem 0 Anderlecht 2; Gent 4 Lokeren 1; Mouscron 0 Cercle Brugge 1; Germinal Beerschot 1 Mechelen 3.
Aug 23: Club Brugge 2 Kortrijk 2; Westerlo 0 Genk 1.
Aug 28: Westerlo 1 Zulte Waregem 2.
Aug 29: Lokeren 4 Mouscron 1; Kortrijk 1 Gent 0; Mechelen 0 St Truiden 2; Roeselare 1 Charleroi 3.
Aug 30: Genk 1 Germinal Beerschot 1; Cercle Brugge 2 Club Brugge 3; Anderlecht 1 Standard 1.
Sep 12: St Truiden 2 Anderlecht 1; Standard 3 Mechelen 0; Zulte Waregem 0 Kortrijk 2; Charleroi 0 Cercle Brugge 4; Gent 5 Roeselare 1; Mouscron 0 Westerlo 1.
Sep 13: Germinal Beerschot 2 Lokeren 1; Club Brugge 1 Genk 1.

Anfield victors...Villa (in white)

ENGLAND

Premier League to adopt quota system

From next season Premier League clubs will be limited to a squad of 25 players, eight of whom must be "home-grown". Chief executive Richard Scudamore confirmed: "The definition of home-grown is trained for three years under the age of 21 by somebody in the English and Welsh professional system."

Aston Villa's 3-1 victory at Anfield ended Liverpool's 18-month unbeaten home record: the longest of any Premier League side.

FINLAND

End of an era for Haka man Huttunen

Experienced midfielder Sami Ristila has replaced Olli Huttunen as the head coach of Haka.

The dismissal of 49-year-old Huttunen, who made 60 appearances in goal for his country, brings to an end his 32-year relationship with the club, during which time he played 431 top-flight games and then coached the side to a league title and two Finnish Cups.

Huttunen will remain part of the national team's coaching staff.

Bayern cheer...boss Louis Van Gaal

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Truiden	6	4	2	0	10	5	14
Gent	6	4	1	1	15	6	13
Anderlecht	6	4	1	1	12	5	13
Club Brugge	6	3	2	1	11	8	11
Standard	6	2	4	0	13	6	10
Kortrijk	6	2	3	1	8	7	9
Mechelen	6	3	0	3	10	10	9
Charleroi	6	2	2	2	6	8	8
Cercle Brugge	6	2	1	3	12	11	7
Genk	6	1	4	1	7	7	7
Germinal B	6	1	3	2	6	8	6
Z Waregem	6	1	3	2	7	10	6
Mouscron	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Lokeren	6	1	1	4	8	12	4
Westerlo	6	1	1	4	4	11	4
Roeselare	6	0	2	4	5	16	2

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Aug 22: Travnik 3 Slavija 0; Rudar 3 Zvijezda 0; Sloboda 2 Celik 1; Modrica 2 Leotar 1; Velez 4 Laktasi 1; Borac 3 Siroki Brijeg 2.
Aug 23: Zeljeznicar 1 Zrinjski 1.
Aug 26: Siroki Brijeg 0 Slavija 0.
Aug 29: Laktasi 4 Olimpik 0; Leotar 0 Velez 1; Celik 1 Modrica 0; Zvijezda 1 Borac 1.
Aug 30: Zrinjski 3 Rudar 1; Siroki Brijeg 2 Sloboda 0; Slavija 1 Zeljeznicar 1.
Aug 31: Sarajevo 2 Travnik 1.
Sep 12: Travnik 0 Zeljeznicar 0; Rudar 1 Slavija 0; Borac 3 Zrinjski 0; Sloboda 1 Zvijezda 0; Modrica 2 Siroki Brijeg 4; Velez 0 Celik 0; Sarajevo 3 Laktasi 1.
Sep 13: Olimpik 1 Leotar 0.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Borac	6	5	1	0	12	3	16
Velez	6	4	2	0	15	3	14
Siroki Brijeg	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Zeljeznicar	6	2	3	1	5	4	9
Modrica	6	2	2	2	10	9	8
Sarajevo	5	2	2	1	7	7	8
Rudar	6	2	1	3	6	6	7
Laktasi	6	2	1	3	11	12	7
Sloboda	6	2	1	3	6	9	7
Zvijezda	6	2	1	3	5	8	7
Olimpik	5	2	1	2	5	10	7
Slavija	6	1	3	2	3	5	6
Zrinjski	6	1	3	2	7	10	6
Leotar	6	2	0	4	3	6	6
Celik	6	1	2	3	3	5	5
Travnik	6	1	2	3	7	11	5

BULGARIA

Aug 21: Beroe 1 Chernomorets 1.
Aug 22: Pirin 1 Slavia 0; Montana 0 Minyor 0; Sliven 3 Botev 0.
Aug 23: Sportist 0 CSKA 2; Lokomotiv Mezdra 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 2.
Aug 24: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Cherno More 0.
Aug 28: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1 Beroe 3.
Aug 29: Slavia 1 Levski 3; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Pirin 0; Minyor 4 Sliven 2; Chernomorets 3 Sportist 0.
Aug 30: Cherno More 3 Botev 0; CSKA 4 Lokomotiv Mezdra 0; Lovech 3 Montana 0.
Sep 11: Montana 2 Slavia 0.
Sep 12: Pirin 0 CSKA 0; Lokomotiv Mezdra 0 Chernomorets 5; Sportist 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1; Levski 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 2.
Sep 13: Beroe 0 Cherno More 0; Sliven 1 Lovech 2.
Sep 14: Botev 0 Minyor 3.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	5	4	1	0	14	0	13
Chernomorets	5	4	1	0	13	3	13
Lok Sofia	5	4	0	1	9	6	12
Minyor	5	3	1	1	8	4	10
Levski	4	3	0	1	11	3	9
Lovech	4	3	0	1	10	2	9
Beroe	5	2	2	1	6	6	8
Montana	5	2	2	1	5	5	8
Cherno More	5	2	1	2	8	3	7
Pirin	5	2	1	2	2	2	7
Sliven	5	1	1	3	6	10	4
Slavia	5	1	1	3	3	7	4
Sportist	5	1	1	3	5	10	4
Lok Plovdiv	5	1	0	4	4	12	3
Botev	5	0	0	5	2	17	0
Lok Mezdra	5	0	0	5	1	17	0

CROATIA

Aug 21: Inter 0 Sibenik 1.
Aug 22: Sesvete 2 Istra 2; Osijek 3 Medimurje 1; Slaven 1 Karlovac 3; Lokomotiva 2 Cibalia 0; Varteks 1 Zagreb 0.
Aug 23: Zadar 0 Dinamo 0; Rijeka 2 Hajduk 0.
Aug 29: Istra 2 Zagreb 1; Cibalia 4 Varteks 0; Hajduk 1 Lokomotiva 0; Sibenik 1 Rijeka 0; Karlovac 1 Inter 0; Medimurje 3 Zadar 0; Sesvete 1 Osijek 2.
Aug 30: Dinamo 6 Slaven 0.
Sep 11: Zagreb 0 Cibalia 1.
Sep 12: Zadar 2 Sesvete 0; Lokomotiva 0 Sibenik 0; Osijek 3 Istra 0; Slaven 3 Medimurje 2; Inter 0 Dinamo 1; Rijeka 1 Karlovac 1.
Sep 13: Varteks 0 Hajduk 3.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	7	6	1	0	28	3	19
Cibalia	7	5	0	2	11	3	15
Karlovac	7	4	3	0	9	3	15
Sibenik	7	3	3	1	7	5	12
Rijeka	7	3	2	2	13	5	11
Osijek	7	3	2	2	11	11	11
Varteks	7	3	2	2	6	10	11
Medimurje	7	3	1	3	13	14	10
Zadar	7	3	1	3	5	9	10
Slaven	7	3	1	3	8	14	10
Inter	7	2	2	3	7	6	8
Hajduk	7	2	2	3	8	8	8
Lokomotiva	7	2	1	4	8	14	7
Istra	7	2	1	4	10	19	7
Sesvete	7	0	2	5	7	15	2
Zagreb	7	0	0	7	4	16	0

CYPRUS

Aug 29: Nea Salamina 1 Ethnikos 1; ENP 0 Apollon 3; AEL 1 Doxa 0; Omonia 3 AEP 2.
Aug 30: Ermis 0 Anorthosis 0; APOP 4 APOEL 3.
Aug 31: Aris 2 APEP 0.
Sep 12: APOP 1 ENP 2; Apollon 2 Ermis 1; APOEL 0 AEP 0.
Sep 13: Doxa 2 Omonia 4; APEP 2 Nea Salamina 1; Ethnikos 1 AEL 4.
Sep 14: Anorthosis 3 Aris 1.

CYPRUS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AEL	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Apollon	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Omonia	2	2	0	0	7	4	6
Anorthosis	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
APOP	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Aris	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
APEP	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
ENP	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
APOEL	2	0	1	1	3	4	1
AEP	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Nea Salamina	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Ermis	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Ethnikos	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Doxa	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

CZECH REPUBLIC

Aug 22: Slovacko 2 Bohemians 0.
Aug 23: Teplice 1 Slavia 1; Liberec 3 Ceske Budejovice 0; Bohemians 1905 0 Plzen 1; Pribram 2 Olomouc 1; Kladno 1 Jablonec 2; Sparta 1 Mlada Boleslav 0.
Aug 24: Ostrava 1 Brno 1.
Aug 29: Mlada Boleslav 0 Bohemians 1905 1; Plzen 1 Kladno 0.
Aug 30: Bohemians 2 Liberec 1; Ceske Budejovice 1 Ostrava 2; Jablonec 0 Pribram 0.
Aug 31: Olomouc 1 Sparta 1; Slavia 3 Slovacko 0; Brno 2 Teplice 3.
Sep 12: Ostrava 1 Bohemians 0; Pribram 1 Plzen 0; Sparta 2 Jablonec 0; Liberec 1 Slavia 1.
Sep 13: Bohemians 1905 2 Ceske Budejovice 0; Kladno 1 Brno 0; Slovacko 0 Teplice 2.
Sep 14: Mlada Boleslav 2 Olomouc 2.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Teplice	7	4	3	0	14	6	15
Ostrava	7	4	2	1	8	5	14
Jablonec	7	4	2	1	9	7	14
Sparta	7	3	4	0	7	2	13
Slavia	7	3	3	1	10	6	12
M Boleslav	7	3	2	2	12	7	11
Brno	7	3	2	2	7	5	11
Pribram	7	3	2	2	7	6	11
Plzen	7	3	1	3	9	9	10
Boh'ians 1905	7	2	3	2	4	3	9
Liberec	7	2	2	3	10	11	8
Olomouc	7	1	4	2	7	8	7
Slovacko	7	2	0	5	8	12	6
Kladno	7	1	1	5	4	11	4
C Budejovice	7	1	1	5	4	12	4
Bohemians	7	1	0	6	4	14	3

DENMARK

Aug 19: AaB 1 Nordsjaelland 0.
Aug 22: Midtjylland 1 Copenhagen 4; AGF 2 Silkeborg 2.
Aug 23: Esbjerg 2 AaB 0; Brondby 6 HB Koge 1; SonderjyskE 1 Nordsjaelland 0.
Aug 24: OB 1 Randers 0.
Aug 29: Nordsjaelland 0 AGF 2.
Aug 30: Randers 0 Esbjerg 1; AaB 1 Midtjylland 0; HB Koge 1 SonderjyskE 0; Copenhagen 1 Brondby 1.
Aug 31: Silkeborg 3 OB 1.
Sep 12: OB 1 Copenhagen 1; Midtjylland 0 Nordsjaelland 2.
Sep 13: Silkeborg 1 SonderjyskE 1; Esbjerg 3 HB Koge 2; Brondby 1 AGF 0.
Sep 14: Randers 0 AaB 3.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AaB	8	6	0	2	13	3	18
AGF	8	5	2	1	13	8	17
Esbjerg	8	5	2	1	13	8	17
OB	8	4	3	1	13	10	15
Brondby	8	4	2	2	17	10	14
Copenhagen	8	3	3	2	15	8	12
Nordsjaelland	8	3	2	3	10	7	11
Silkeborg	8	2	4	2	14	12	10
SonderjyskE	8	2	2	4	5	8	8
HB Koge	8	1	2	5	8	25	5
Midtjylland	8	1	1	6	6	16	4
Randers	8	0	1	7	6	18	1

ENGLAND

Tuesday, August 18
Sunderland 1 (Bent 18)
Chelsea 3 (Ballack 52, Lampard pen 61, Deco 70) Att: 41,179

Wigan 0
Wolverhampton 1 (Keogh 6) Att: 16,661

Wednesday, August 19
Birmingham 1 (McFadden pen 90)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 19,922

Burnley 1 (Blake 19)
Manchester United 0 Att: 20,872

Hull 1 (Hunt 25)
Tottenham 5 (Defoe 10, 45, 90, Palacios 14, Keane 78) Att: 24,735

Liverpool 4 (Fernando Torres 4, Johnson 45, Kuijt 78, Ngog 90)
Stoke 0 Att: 44,318

Saturday, August 22
Arsenal 4 (Diaby 18, 21, Gallas 51, Ramsey 68)
Portsmouth 1 (Kaboul 37) Att: 60,049

Birmingham 0
Stoke 0 Att: 21,694

Hull 1 (Ghilas 61)
Bolton 0 Att: 22,999

Manchester City 1 (Adebayor 17)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 47,287

Sunderland 2 (Jones 32, 53)
Blackburn 1 (Givet 21) Att: 37,106

Wigan 0
Manchester United 5 (Rooney 56, 65, Berbatov 58, Owen 85, Nani 90) Att: 18,164

Sunday, August 23
Burnley 1 (Elliott 34)
Everton 0 Att: 19,983

Fulham 0
Chelsea 2 (Drogba 39, Anelka 76) Att: 25,404

West Ham 1 (Cole 49)
Tottenham 2 (Defoe 54, Lennon 79) Att: 33,095

Monday, August 24
Liverpool 1 (Fernando Torres 72)
Aston Villa 3 (Lucas og 34, Davies 45, A Young pen 75) Att: 43,667

On the move...Gudjohnsen

FRANCE

Monaco's man

Eidur Gudjohnsen has joined Monaco from Barcelona. The 30-year-old forward, who struggled to hold down a starting place after moving to Spain from Chelsea in 2006, has signed a two-year deal.

GERMANY

Hamburg blow

After scoring four goals in four games for the early league leaders Hamburg, striker Paolo Guerrero could miss the rest of the season after tearing cruciate knee ligaments while playing for Peru in their 3-1 defeat against Venezuela.

Dieter Hecking resigned as coach of Hannover after a poor start to the season in which the club were knocked out of the German Cup by fourth-tier side Eintracht Trier. Andreas Bergmann has been given a contract as his replacement until the end of the season.

Sidelined...Guerrero

7,000 litres of beer given to fans by Bayern Munich after a poor start to the season

Saturday, August 29
Blackburn 0
West Ham 0 Att: 23,421

Bolton 2 (Davies 33, Cohen 47)
Liverpool 3 (Johnson 41, Fernando Torres 56, Gerrard 83) Att: 23,284

Chelsea 3 (Anelka 45, Ballack 47, A Cole 52)
Burnley 0 Att: 40,906

Manchester United 2 (Rooney pen 59, Diaby og 64)
Arsenal 1 (Arshavin 40) Att: 75,095

Stoke 1 (Kitson 43)
Sunderland 0 Att: 27,091

Tottenham 2 (Crouch 72, Lennon 90)
Birmingham 1 (Bowyer 75) Att: 35,318

Wolverhampton 1 (Stearman 46)
Hull 1 (Geovanni 3) Att: 27,906

Sunday, August 30
Aston Villa 2 (Paintsil og 3, Agbonlahor 59)
Fulham 0 Att: 32,917

Everton 2 (Saha 62, Baines pen 90)
Wigan 1 (Scharner 57) Att: 35,122

Portsmouth 0
Manchester City 1 (Adebayor 30) Att: 17,826

Saturday, September 12
Blackburn 3 (Diouf 19, Roberts 56, Dunn 64)
Wolverhampton 1 (Maierhofer 88) Att: 24,845

Liverpool 4 (Benayoun 27, 61, 82, Kuijt 41)
Burnley 0 Att: 43,817

Manchester City 4 (Almunia og 20, Bellamy 74, Adebayor 80, Wright-Phillips 84)
Arsenal 2 (Van Persie 62, Rosicky 88) Att: 47,339

Portsmouth 2 (Kaboul 25, Boateng 63)
Bolton 3 (Cohen 13, Taylor pen 41, Cahill 89) Att: 17,564

Stoke 1 (Abdoulaye Faye 32)
Chelsea 2 (Drogba 45, Malouda 90) Att: 27,440

Sunderland 4 (Bent pen 13, 66, Reid 49, Zayatte og 75)
Hull 1 (Zayatte 43) Att: 38,997

Tottenham 1 (Defoe 1)
Manchester United 3 (Giggs 25, Anderson 41, Rooney 78) Att: 35,785

Wigan 1 (Rodallega 55)
West Ham 0 Att: 17,142

Sunday, September 13
Birmingham 0
Aston Villa 1 (Agbonlahor 85) Att: 25,196

Fulham 2 (Konchesky 57, Duff 79)
Everton 1 (Cahill 33) Att: 24,191

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	5	5	0	0	12	3	15
Man Utd	5	4	0	1	11	3	12
Man City	4	4	0	0	8	2	12
Tottenham	5	4	0	1	12	7	12
Liverpool	5	3	0	2	13	7	9
Aston Villa	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Sunderland	5	3	0	2	8	6	9
Stoke	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
Arsenal	4	2	0	2	13	8	6
Fulham	4	2	0	2	3	5	6
Wigan	5	2	0	3	4	8	6
Burnley	5	2	0	3	2	9	6
West Ham	4	1	1	2	3	3	4
Blackburn	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Birmingham	5	1	1	3	2	4	4
Wolves	5	1	1	3	3	7	4
Hull	5	1	1	3	5	12	4
Bolton	4	1	0	3	5	7	3
Everton	4	1	0	3	4	10	3
Portsmouth	5	0	0	5	3	10	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 Jermain Defoe (Tottenham)
5 Wayne Rooney (Manchester United)
4 Emmanuel Adebayor (Manchester City)
4 Darren Bent (Sunderland)
4 Didier Drogba (Chelsea)

FINLAND

Aug 21: MyPa 0 Jaro 0.
Aug 22: KuPS 1 Tampere 2; Haka 2 Inter 2; Mariehamn 1 TPS 1.
Aug 23: RoPS 2 VPS 3; Honka 5 JJK 2; Lahti 1 HJK 2.
Sep 4: MyPa 4 JJK 0.
Sep 11: VPS 0 MyPa 2.
Sep 12: JJK 0 Jaro 2; Tampere 1 Mariehamn 0; Honka 2 Inter 3.
Sep 13: TPS 5 Lahti 2; HJK 4 RoPS 0; KuPS 5 Haka 1.

FINLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HJK	21	11	8	2	38	18	41
TPS	21	11	8	2	37	17	41
Honka	21	9	9	3	45	26	36
Mariehamn	21	7	12	2	22	14	33
Tampere	21	10	2	9	21	22	32
Haka	21	8	7	6	29	26	31
Inter	21	9	4	8	27	24	31
MyPa	21	8	5	8	25	22	29
VPS	21	9	2	10	23	28	29
Jaro	21	6	7	8	26	26	25
Lahti	21	6	7	8	25	30	25
KuPS	21	4	4	13	21	44	16
JJK	21	3	6	12	20	39	15
RoPS	21	4	3	14	21	44	15

FRANCE

Saturday, August 22
Auxerre 0
Lyon 3 (Boumsong 31, Makoun 45, Pjanic 65) Att: 15,294

Le Mans 2 (Helstad 45, Le Tallec 53)
Nancy 1 (Macaluso 90) Att: 8,492

Monaco 2 (Nimani 22, Nene 33)
Lorient 0 Att: 8,016

Montpellier 2 (Costa pen 61, Ait-Fana 90)
Sochaux 0 Att: 15,295

Rennes 1 (Leroy pen 37)
Marseille 1 (Niang 52) Att: 28,631

Saint-Etienne 0
Boulogne 1 (Cuvillier 37) Att: 25,032

Valenciennes 2 (Tiene 59, Mater 90)
Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Luyindula 35, Erdinc 56, Jallet 84) Att: 12,927

Sunday, August 23
Bordeaux 4 (Jussie 44, Gourcuff 53, 70, Diarra 76)
Nice 0 Att: 32,065

Grenoble 1 (Ljuboja 12)
Lens 2 (Eduardo 7, Boukari 70) Att: 15,341

Lille 1 (Vittek 44)
Toulouse 1 (M'Bengue 74) Att: 14,354

Saturday, August 29
Boulogne 0
Auxerre 0 Att: 11,090

Lens 2 (Demont pen 21, Jemaa 72)
Rennes 2 (Bangoura 4, Gyan 90) Att: 33,815

Lorient 1 (Vahirua 63)
Le Mans 0 Att: 11,072

Lyon 3 (Gomis 38, Lopez 51, Bastos 68)
Nancy 1 (Hadji 57) Att: 34,193

Nice 0
Montpellier 3 (Dernis 4, Montano 49, Compan 77) Att: 9,027

Saint-Etienne 1 (Landrin 23)
Grenoble 0 Att: 25,321

Sochaux 1 (Sverkos pen 20)
Monaco 0 Att: 13,141

Sunday, August 30
Marseille 0
Bordeaux 0 Att: 55,920

Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Clement 27, Luyindula 78, Jallet 90)
Lille 0 Att: 35,439

Toulouse 0
Valenciennes 1 (Samassa 87) Att: 15,029

Saturday, September 12
Bordeaux 1 (Gouffran 18)
Grenoble 0 Att: 28,211

Le Mans 1 (Maiga 61)
Marseille 2 (Niang 14, Brandao 70) Att: 16,310

Lille 1 (Frau 71)
Sochaux 0 Att: 13,043

Lyon 1 (Bastos 72)
Lorient 0 Att: 36,600

Montpellier 1 (Costa pen 39)
Lens 0 Att: 16,793

Nancy 0
Toulouse 0 Att: 17,062

Valenciennes 1 (Pujol 75)
Boulogne 1 (Moreira 83) Att: 11,769

Sunday, September 13
Auxerre 2 (Hengbart 30, Niculae 78)
Nice 0 Att: 8,776

Monaco 2 (Park 85, Nene 88)
Paris Saint-Germain 0 Att: 10,459

Rennes 1 (Marveaux 62)
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 22,009

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bordeaux	5	4	1	0	12	3	13
Lyon	5	4	1	0	10	3	13
Montpellier	5	3	2	0	9	3	11
Marseille	5	3	2	0	6	2	11
PSG	5	3	1	1	10	6	10
Rennes	5	2	3	0	8	4	9
Monaco	5	3	0	2	5	5	9
Boulogne	5	2	2	1	4	5	8
Nancy	5	2	1	2	9	6	7
Lens	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
Lorient	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
Sochaux	5	2	0	3	4	6	6
Toulouse	5	1	2	2	4	4	5
Le Mans	5	1	1	3	6	9	4
Valenciennes	5	1	1	3	5	8	4
Lille	5	1	1	3	3	7	4
Auxerre	5	1	1	3	2	6	4
Nice	5	1	1	3	3	10	4
Saint-Etienne	5	1	0	4	2	7	3
Grenoble	5	0	0	5	2	8	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
4 Yoann Gourcuff (Bordeaux)
3 Marouane Chamakh (Bordeaux)
3 Alberto Costa (Montpellier)
3 Nene (Monaco)
3 Mamadou Niang (Marseille)

GERMANY

Friday, August 21
1899 Hoffenheim 0
Schalke 0 Att: 30,150

Saturday, August 22
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Haedo Valdez 27)
Stuttgart 1 (Niedermeier 47) Att: 72,100

Freiburg 0
Bayer Leverkusen 5 (Kiessling 35, Barnetta 47, 76, Derdiyok 69, 84) Att: 22,000

Koln 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 49,200

Mainz 2 (Ivanschitz 25, Bance 38)
Bayern Munich 1 (Noveski og 47) Att: 20,300

Nurnberg 0
Hannover 2 (Stajner 15, 86) Att: 38,671

Sunday, August 23
Bochum 1 (Yahia 47)
Hertha Berlin 0 Att: 18,853

Werder Bremen 3 (Pizarro 21, 38, Naldo 88)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 34,800

Wolfsburg 2 (Misimovic 52, Martins 56)
Hamburg 4 (Guerrero 3, Elia 7, Petric 75, Castelen 90) Att: 30,000

GREECE

Zico takes charge

Former Brazil international Zico, who was sacked as coach of CSKA Moscow in early September, replaced Temuri Ketsbaia at Olympiakos.

Ketsbaia, who was only appointed in May, left the reigning Greek champions on the eve of their opening Champions League game, against AZ Alkmaar.

New start...Zico

HOLLAND

Cup winner departs

Last season's Dutch Cup winners Heerenveen parted company with coach Trond Sollied after a disappointing start to the new campaign.

ITALY

Roma up and running

Claudio Ranieri began his career as coach of Roma with a last-gasp win at Siena. The former Juventus, Parma and Chelsea boss took over after Luciano Spalletti was sacked following back-to-back league defeats for the *Giallorossi* at the start of the season.

Genoa, Juventus and Sampdoria top the table with 100 per cent records, while Internazionale's 4-0 victory in the Milanese derby equalled their biggest-ever margin of victory over their city rivals. It was only the fourth time in Milan's history that they had been beaten by four or more goals at home in Serie A.

LATVIA

Skonto score seven

Skonto Riga put seven goals past city rivals Daugava to keep up the pressure on Metalurgs and Ventspils at the top of the league. Andrejs Pereplotkins scored a hat-trick.

Friday, August 28
Monchengladbach 2 (Bobadilla 29, Reus 84)
Mainz 0 Att: 42,217

Saturday, August 29
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Friedrich 41, Kiessling 68)
Bochum 1 (Friedrich og 32) Att: 27,122

Bayern Munich 3 (Gomez 27, Robben 68, 80)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 69,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Amanatidis 68)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Zidan 61) Att: 51,050

Hannover 0
1899 Hoffenheim 1 (Carlos Eduardo 40) Att: 34,257

Schalke 0
Freiburg 1 (Cha 40) Att: 60,198

Stuttgart 0
Nurnberg 0 Att: 42,000

Sunday, August 30
Hamburg 3 (Guerrero 19, 66, Trochowski pen 86)
Koln 1 (Chihi 76) Att: 54,112

Hertha Berlin 2 (Piszczek 77, Ebert 90)
Werder Bremen 3 (Ozil 57, Borowski 74, Naldo 83) Att: 49,176

Saturday, September 12
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Hummels 10)
Bayern Munich 5 (Gomez 36, Schweinsteiger 50, Ribery 65, Muller 78, 88) Att: 80,552

Freiburg 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Franz 68, Meier 90) Att: 23,600

Hamburg 3 (Petric 30, Elia 58, Ze Roberto 90)
Stuttgart 1 (Pogrebnyak 62) Att: 57,000

1899 Hoffenheim 3 (Ba 16, Obasi 58, Compper 79)
Bochum 0 Att: 29,500

Mainz 2 (Ivanschitz pen 80, Bance 85)
Hertha Berlin 1 (Nicu 50) Att: 20,300

Nurnberg 1 (Kluge 6)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 46,780

Wolfsburg 2 (Misimovic 76, Grafite pen 80)
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Rolfes 38, pen 51, Kiessling 58) Att: 30,000

Sunday, September 13
Koln 1 (Podolski 6)
Schalke 2 (Farfan 2, Kobiashvili 46) Att: 50,000

Werder Bremen 0
Hannover 0 Att: 34,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hamburg	5	4	1	0	15	6	13
B Leverkusen	5	4	1	0	13	5	13
Schalke	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
E Frankfurt	5	2	3	0	7	4	9
Bayern	5	2	2	1	11	5	8
Werder	5	2	2	1	9	6	8
Hoffenheim	5	2	2	1	5	2	8
Mainz	5	2	2	1	7	7	8
M'gladbach	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
Wolfsburg	5	2	0	3	9	11	6
Hannover	5	1	2	2	3	3	5
Stuttgart	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Nurnberg	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
B Dortmund	5	1	2	2	5	11	5
Bochum	5	1	1	3	5	11	4
Freiburg	5	1	1	3	4	12	4
Hertha Berlin	5	1	0	4	5	8	3
Koln	5	0	1	4	3	9	1

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 Stefan Kiessling (Bayer Leverkusen)
4 Paolo Guerrero (Hamburg)

GREECE

Aug 22: Aris 1 Atromitos 0; Xanthi 1 Giannina 1; Ergotelis 0 Panathinaikos 3.
Aug 23: Asteras 0 Larisa 0; Levadiakos 0 Kavala 1; Panthrakikos 1 Iraklis 2.
Aug 29: Kavala 0 Asteras 1; Panionios 1 Ergotelis 1; Iraklis 2 Aris 2.
Aug 30: Atromitos 0 AEK 1; PAOK 3 Levadiakos 0; Giannina 2 Panthrakikos 0; Panathinaikos 1 Xanthi 0; Larisa 0 Olympiakos 2.
Sep 12: Olympiakos 0 Kavala 0; Larisa 2 Atromitos 2; Aris 1 Giannina 0.
Sep 13: AEK 1 Iraklis 0; Asteras 1 PAOK 1; Ergotelis 1 Xanthi 0; Levadiakos 1 Panionios 0; Panthrakikos 0 Panathinaikos 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	3	3	0	0	5	0	9
Aris	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
AEK	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Asteras	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
PAOK	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Olympiakos	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Giannina	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Iraklis	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Kavala	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Ergotelis	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Levadiakos	3	1	0	2	1	4	3
Larisa	3	0	2	1	2	4	2
Panionios	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Atromitos	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Xanthi	3	0	1	2	1	3	1
Panthrakikos	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

HOLLAND

Aug 22: Vitesse 1 Den Haag 3; Willem II 0 Heracles 1; VVV 2 Groningen 2.
Aug 23: Twente 2 RKC 1; Ajax 0 Sparta 0; Heerenveen 0 AZ 2; PSV 3 NAC 1; Feyenoord 4 Roda JC 0.
Aug 28: RKC 0 Den Haag 2; Roda JC 3 Vitesse 4.
Aug 29: NEC 1 VVV 1; AZ 2 Willem II 1; Utrecht 2 Sparta 0.
Aug 30: Feyenoord 1 Twente 1; Groningen 0 PSV 2; NAC 2 Heerenveen 0; Heracles 0 Ajax 3.
Sep 12: PSV 3 Roda JC 0; Twente 3 Utrecht 2; Heerenveen 0 Groningen 1; Den Haag 2 AZ 1.
Sep 13: Willem II 2 Feyenoord 3; Sparta 1 RKC 0; Ajax 6 NAC 0; VVV 1 Heracles 0; Vitesse 2 NEC 2.

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	6	4	2	0	16	8	14
Feyenoord	6	4	2	0	11	3	14
Twente	6	4	2	0	10	5	14
Ajax	6	4	1	1	18	5	13
AZ	6	4	0	2	15	6	12
Utrecht	5	3	1	1	8	5	10
Den Haag	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
NAC	6	3	1	2	7	11	10
VVV	6	1	5	0	11	10	8
Heracles	6	2	1	3	4	7	7
Sparta	6	2	1	3	3	7	7
NEC	5	1	2	2	7	7	5
Vitesse	6	1	2	3	8	12	5
Groningen	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Roda JC	6	1	2	3	5	12	5
Heerenveen	6	1	1	4	2	9	4
Willem II	6	1	0	5	7	10	3
RKC	6	0	0	6	2	16	0

HUNGARY

Aug 21: Vasas 3 Ferencvaros 2.
Aug 22: Diosgyor 4 Kecskemet 1; Papa 1 Gyor 0; Nyiregyhaza 1 MTK 1; Paks 2 Kaposvar 0.
Aug 23: Honved 1 Ujpest 1; Szombathely 4 Fehervar 3.
Aug 26: Szombathely 0 Ferencvaros 0.
Aug 28: Fehervar 1 Zalaegerszeg 2.
Aug 29: Debrecen 3 Nyiregyhaza 1; Kaposvar 0 Ferencvaros 0; Papa 2 Kecskemet 0; Diosgyor 0 Vasas 1; MTK 1 Paks 1.
Aug 30: Ujpest 3 Szombathely 1; Gyor 2 Honved 0.
Sep 11: Paks 0 Debrecen 1.
Sep 12: Zalaegerszeg 1 Ujpest 4; Szombathely 1 Gyor 2; Honved 0 Kecskemet 1; Papa 2 Diosgyor 1; Vasas 1 Kaposvar 0; Nyiregyhaza 2 Fehervar 3.
Sep 13: Ferencvaros 2 MTK 1.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fehervar	7	5	0	2	19	13	15
Ujpest	7	4	2	1	13	8	14
MTK	7	4	2	1	11	7	14
Gyor	7	4	1	2	9	5	13
Debrecen	5	4	0	1	8	3	12
Papa	7	4	0	3	8	5	12
Vasas	7	4	0	3	10	15	12
Ferencvaros	7	2	3	2	10	9	9
Kecskemet	7	3	0	4	13	16	9
Nyiregyhaza	7	2	2	3	13	11	8
Kaposvar	7	2	2	3	8	7	8
Paks	7	2	2	3	7	8	8
Diosgyor	7	2	0	5	10	12	6
Zalaegerszeg	6	2	0	4	6	14	6
Honved	6	1	1	4	5	9	4
Szombathely	7	1	1	5	9	17	4

ICELAND

Aug 22: FH 0 Grindavik 3; Fram 3 Stjarnan 2; Keflavik 1 KR 2; Fylkir 2 Fjolnir 2; Valur 0 Breidablik 3.
Aug 23: IBV 1 Throttur 0.
Aug 26: KR 3 IBV 0; Fram 4 Grindavik 3.
Aug 29: IBV 1 Valur 1; Fjolnir 3 Keflavik 3.
Aug 30: KR 3 Fram 1.
Aug 31: Throttur 0 FH 0; Grindavik 2 Fylkir 3; Stjarnan 1 Breidablik 3.
Sep 3: Grindavik 1 IBV 1.
Sep 13: Fylkir 2 Throttur 0; Valur 3 Stjarnan 3; FH 5 IBV 0.

ICELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FH	20	15	2	3	54	20	47
KR	19	12	3	4	44	26	39
Fylkir	20	12	3	5	37	23	39
Fram	19	8	4	7	34	29	28
Breidablik	19	8	4	7	33	31	28
Keflavik	19	6	8	5	29	34	26
Stjarnan	20	7	4	9	41	36	25
Valur	20	7	4	9	24	36	25
Grindavik	19	6	4	9	33	37	22
IBV	20	6	4	10	21	36	22
Fjolnir	19	3	5	11	25	41	14
Throttur	20	3	3	14	20	46	12

ISRAEL

Aug 22: Ahi Nazareth 1 Hapoel Petach Tikva 2; Maccabi Petach Tikva 1 Ramat Gan 1; Be'er Sheva 2 Ra'anana 1; Netanya 1 Hapoel Haifa 2; Maccabi Tel Aviv 3 Bnei Sakhnin 1; Maccabi Haifa 2 Acre 1.
Aug 23: Ashdod 0 Bnei Yehuda 3 (awarded).
Aug 24: Beitar 0 Hapoel Tel Aviv 0.
Aug 29: Hapoel Petach Tikva 0 Maccabi Tel Aviv 2; Hapoel Haifa 0 Ashdod 1; Acre 1 Netanya 1; Ra'anana 1 Maccabi Haifa 3; Ramat Gan 2 Be'er Sheva 2.
Aug 30: Hapoel Tel Aviv 1 Maccabi Petach Tikva 1.
Aug 31: Bnei Sakhnin 0 Beitar 0; Bnei Yehuda 2 Ahi Nazareth 0.
Sep 12: Maccabi Petach Tikva 1 Beitar 3; Maccabi Haifa 3 Ramat Gan 1; Netanya 1 Ra'anana 1; Ashdod 1 Acre 0; Ahi Nazareth 1 Hapoel Haifa 3; Bnei Sakhnin 2 Hapoel Petach Tikva 0.
Sep 13: Be'er Sheva 1 Hapoel Tel Aviv 3.
Sep 14: Maccabi Tel Aviv 0 Bnei Yehuda 0.

ISRAEL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
M Haifa	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Bnei Yehuda	3	2	1	0	5	0	7
M Tel Aviv	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
H Haifa	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Ashdod	3	2	0	1	2	3	6
H Tel Aviv	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Beitar	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Bnei Sakhnin	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Be'er Sheva	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
H Petach Tikva	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Netanya	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
Ramat Gan	3	0	2	1	4	6	2
M Petach Tikva	3	0	2	1	3	5	2
Acre	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Ra'anana	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Ahi Nazareth	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

ITALY

Saturday, August 22
Bologna 1 (Osvaldo 24)
Fiorentina 1 (Mutu 65) Att: 18,000

Siena 1 (Ghezzal 34)
Milan 2 (Alexandre Pato 29, 48) Att: 15,000

Sunday, August 23
Catania 1 (Morimoto 38)
Sampdoria 2 (Pazzini 9, Gastaldello 90) Att: 14,325

Genoa 3 (Criscito 49, Zapater 69, Biava 83)
Roma 2 (Taddei 53, Totti 64) Att: 25,414

Inter 1 (Eto'o pen 56)
Bari 1 (Kutuzov 74) Att: 53,369

Happy days...Roma win at last

MALTA

A debut to remember for Barbara

New signing Etienne Barbara made a dream start to his new career with Hibernians, scoring a hat-trick in his side's 3-1 victory over Marsaxlokk on the opening day of the Maltese league season.

The 27-year-old striker played for German fourth-tier side Verl last term.

NORWAY

Disappointing run

Tor Ole Skullerud quit as coach of Norwegian Cup holders Valerenga following a run of seven successive league defeats.

PORTUGAL

Benfica go goal crazy

Benfica recorded their biggest win for almost seven years when they trounced Vitoria Setubal 8-1 at the Estadio da Luz.

A 4-0 defeat at home to Leiria in the next game cost bottom of the table Setubal coach Carlos Azenha his job. Second from bottom Naval named Augusto Inacio as their new coach after they sacked Ulisses Morais.

At the top of the table, Sporting Braga maintained their perfect start with a 2-1 win at Maritimo.

Winner...Benfica's Oscar Cardozo

Juventus 1 (Iaquinta 11)
Chievo 0 Att: 23,523

Lazio 1 (Rocchi 22)
Atalanta 0 Att: 20,000

Livorno 0
Cagliari 0 Att: 10,724

Palermo 2 (Cavani 44, Miccoli pen 75)
Napoli 1 (Hamsik 73) Att: 30,936

Udinese 2 (Di Natale pen 45, 89)
Parma 2 (Paloschi 42, Lucarelli 49) Att: 15,383

Saturday, August 29
Bari 0
Bologna 0 Att: 20,000

Milan 0
Inter 4 (Thiago Motta 29, Milito pen 36, Maicon 45, Stankovic 67) Att: 78,467

Sunday, August 30
Atalanta 0
Genoa 1 (Moretti 45) Att: 13,014

Cagliari 1 (Jeda pen 76)
Siena 3 (Calaio 52, 70, Reginaldo 87) Att: 10,000

Chievo 1 (Pellissier 16)
Lazio 2 (Cruz pen 41, 53) Att: 8,581

Fiorentina 1 (Jovetic 29)
Palermo 0 Att: 24,576

Napoli 3 (Quagliarella 10, 83, Hamsik 36)
Livorno 1 (Lucarelli 47) Att: 32,063

Parma 2 (Galloppa 13, Paloschi 47)
Catania 1 (Biagianti 15) Att: 11,745

Roma 1 (De Rossi 35)
Juventus 3 (Diego 25, 68, Felipe Melo 90) Att: 55,560

Sampdoria 3 (Pazzini 11, Mannini 45, Cassano 83)
Udinese 1 (Di Natale 56) Att: 22,995

Saturday, September 12
Lazio 0
Juventus 2 (Caceres 72, Trezeguet 90) Att: 60,000

Livorno 0
Milan 0 Att: 15,982

Sunday, September 13
Atalanta 0
Sampdoria 1 (Mannini 63) Att: 13,461

Bologna 0
Chievo 2 (Pinzi 18, Pellissier 29) Att: 14,896

Fiorentina 1 (Gilardino 55)
Cagliari 0 Att: 23,176

Genoa 4 (Floccari pen 45, Mesto 55, Crespo 75, Kharja pen 88)
Napoli 1 (Hamsik 41) Att: 31,945

Inter 2 (Eto'o 71, Milito 88)
Parma 0 Att: 51,232

Palermo 1 (Budan 90)
Bari 1 (Allegretti 2) Att: 20,004

Siena 1 (Maccarone 26)
Roma 2 (Mexes 73, Riise 89) Att: 9,022

Udinese 4 (Floro Flores 29, Di Natale 55, pen 70, 79)
Catania 2 (Morimoto 11, Mascara pen 34) Att: 13,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genoa	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Juventus	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Sampdoria	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Inter	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Fiorentina	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
Lazio	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Udinese	3	1	1	1	7	7	4
Palermo	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Parma	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Milan	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
Siena	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
Chievo	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Bari	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Napoli	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Roma	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Bologna	3	0	2	1	1	3	2
Livorno	3	0	2	1	1	3	2
Cagliari	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Atalanta	3	0	0	3	0	3	0
Catania	3	0	0	3	4	8	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
6 Antonio Di Natale (Udinese)
3 Marek Hamsik (Napoli)

LATVIA

Aug 19: Metalurgs 0 Skonto 1.
Aug 20: Daugava 0 Jurmala 3.
Aug 23: Jurmala 1 Olimps/RFS 0.
Aug 24: Dinaburg 1 Daugava 0.
Aug 26: Olimps/RFS 2 Tranzits 1.
Aug 29: Blazma 0 Jurmala 3; Daugava 0 Skonto 7.
Aug 30: Ventspils 1 Metalurgs 2; Olimps/RFS 0 Dinaburg 1.
Sep 5: Tranzits 1 Blazma 1.
Sep 10: Dinaburg 1 Blazma 0.
Sep 13: Ventspils 1 Dinaburg 0; Metalurgs 3 Daugava 0; Olimps/RFS 0 Skonto 2; Jurmala 1 Tranzits 2.

LATVIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metalurgs	24	18	3	3	64	17	57
Ventspils	23	17	3	3	68	17	54
Skonto	23	17	2	4	70	18	53
Dinaburg	24	13	4	7	28	20	43
Jurmala	24	10	4	10	31	42	34
Olimps/RFS	25	7	4	14	37	50	25
Blazma	24	4	4	16	17	58	16
Tranzits	25	2	9	14	17	48	15
Daugava	24	1	5	18	18	80	8

LITHUANIA

Aug 23: LKKA 0 Tauras 1; Banga 4 Kruoja 2; Vetra 2 Suduva 0; Ekranas 2 Siauliai 0.
Aug 29: Vetra 3 Kruoja 0; Suduva 1 Ekranas 1; Siauliai 1 LKKA 1; Banga 0 Tauras 2.
Sep 5: Banga 1 Siauliai 2; Kruoja 0 Tauras 3.
Sep 13: Kruoja 2 Ekranas 2; LKKA 0 Vetra 1; Banga 1 Suduva 1; Tauras 0 Siauliai 1.

LITHUANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vetra	20	14	4	2	43	14	46
Ekranas	20	12	7	1	39	15	43
Suduva	21	11	8	2	42	14	41
Siauliai	22	10	2	10	27	23	32
Tauras	22	8	5	9	21	20	29
Banga	22	5	6	11	20	36	21
LKKA	21	3	3	15	13	42	12
Kruoja	22	2	5	15	18	59	11

MACEDONIA

Aug 23: Pobeda 0 Makedonija 0; Metalurg 2 Sileks 2; Milano 0 Turnovo 2; Rabotnicki 3 Pelister 0.
Aug 30: Renova 3 Vardar 2; Sloga 1 Teteks 0.
Sep 13: Pelister 1 Renova 1; Turnovo 0 Rabotnicki 2; Sileks 4 Milano 0; Teteks 0 Metalurg 0; Makedonija 4 Sloga 1; Vardar 0 Pobeda 0.

MACEDONIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rabotnicki	5	4	1	0	10	2	13
Renova	5	3	1	1	8	5	10
Sileks	5	2	3	0	11	6	9
Makedonija	5	2	2	1	11	4	8
Turnovo	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Pelister	5	2	2	1	6	6	8
Teteks	5	1	2	2	6	7	5
Sloga	5	1	2	2	4	7	5
Vardar	5	1	2	2	6	10	5
Metalurg	5	0	4	1	5	6	4
Pobeda*	5	0	3	2	4	8	0
Milano	5	0	0	5	1	13	0

**3pts deducted for not paying a debt to a former player*

MOLDOVA

Aug 18: Iskra-Stal 1 Sfintul Gheorghe 0; Tiraspol 1 Zimbru 0.
Aug 22: Dinamo 1 Nistru 2; CSCA-Rapid 1 Tiraspol 2; Sfintul Gheorghe 1 Academia 3; Olimpia 0 Iskra-Stal 1; Zimbru 1 Viitorul 1; Sheriff 0 Dacia 0.
Aug 26: Dacia 1 Tiraspol 0; Iskra-Stal 2 Nistru 1; Zimbru 2 Sfintul Gheorghe 1.
Aug 30: Iskra-Stal 2 Dinamo 0; Academia 2 Olimpia 1; Dacia 1 Sfintul Gheorghe 0; Viitorul 2 CSCA-Rapid 2; Nistru 0 Zimbru 0; Tiraspol 1 Sheriff 0.
Sep 7: Sheriff 5 Dinamo 0.
Sep 12: Dinamo 3 Zimbru 1; Olimpia 0 Dacia 1.
Sep 13: CSCA-Rapid 1 Nistru 0; Sfintul Gheorghe 2 Tiraspol 0; Iskra-Stal 2 Academia 0; Sheriff 3 Viitorul 0.

MOLDOVA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iskra-Stal	10	8	0	2	18	9	24
Dacia	10	6	3	1	18	7	21
Sheriff	7	5	1	1	21	1	16
CSCA-Rapid	10	4	2	4	13	21	14
Zimbru	8	3	3	2	11	10	12
Tiraspol	10	3	3	4	7	9	12
Academia	9	3	3	3	12	15	12
Olimpia	8	3	2	3	11	5	11
S Gheorghe	10	3	1	6	9	13	10
Dinamo	10	3	0	7	12	21	9
Viitorul	10	1	4	5	6	16	7
Nistru	10	1	4	5	6	17	7

NORWAY

Aug 21: Fredrikstad 1 Rosenborg 4.
Aug 22: Lillestrom 2 Stromsgodset 1; Molde 3 Aalesund 1.
Aug 23: Odd Grenland 1 Tromso 0; Lyn 4 Start 1; Bodo/Glimt 2 Viking 0; Stabaek 3 Valerenga 2.
Aug 24: Brann 0 Sandefjord 1.
Aug 29: Valerenga 2 Molde 1.
Aug 30: Aalesund 1 Bodo/Glimt 1; Tromso 2 Fredrikstad 0; Viking 2 Sandefjord 2; Stromsgodset 3 Odd Grenland 1; Start 0 Brann 1.
Aug 31: Lillestrom 1 Stabaek 2; Rosenborg 4 Lyn 1.
Sep 12: Fredrikstad 3 Valerenga 1.
Sep 13: Odd Grenland 2 Lillestrom 3; Lyn 0 Aalesund 2; Sandefjord 2 Tromso 0; Bodo/Glimt 1 Start 1; Molde 2 Stromsgodset 1; Stabaek 1 Rosenborg 2.
Sep 14: Brann 1 Viking 1.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	23	17	6	0	49	17	57
Molde	24	14	5	5	52	29	47
Odd Grenland	24	10	9	5	43	32	39
Stabaek	24	10	8	6	40	26	38
Brann	24	10	7	7	42	38	37
Start	24	8	9	7	39	44	33
Viking	24	8	8	8	33	33	32
Sandefjord	24	8	8	8	32	33	32
Tromso	23	7	8	8	29	31	29
Lillestrom	24	7	8	9	34	40	29
Valerenga	24	8	4	12	35	43	28
Aalesund	24	7	6	11	26	38	27
Fredrikstad	24	7	4	13	27	36	25
Bodo/Glimt	24	6	7	11	25	42	25
Stromsgodset	24	6	5	13	28	36	23
Lyn	24	2	10	12	26	42	16

POLAND

Aug 21: Zaglebie 0 Ruch 1; Arka 0 Wisla 1.
Aug 22: Belchatow 0 Piast 1; Polonia 1 Korona 0; Jagiellonia 2 Slask 0; Polonia Warsaw 0 Lechia 1.
Aug 23: Cracovia 1 Lech 0; Odra 1 Legia 0.
Aug 28: Piast 2 Odra 1; Legia 1 Polonia Bytom 0.
Aug 29: Ruch 2 Polonia Warsaw 0; Wisla 2 Jagiellonia 1; Lechia 1 Slask 1; Korona 1 Cracovia 1.
Aug 30: Zaglebie 0 Arka 2; Lech 2 Belchatow 2.
Sep 11: Odra 0 Korona 2; Polonia Bytom 4 Piast 0.
Sep 12: Belchatow 2 Ruch 1; Cracovia 1 Arka 1; Slask 0 Legia 0; Jagiellonia 2 Lech 3.
Sep 13: Polonia Warsaw 0 Zaglebie 1; Lechia 0 Wisla 1.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla	6	6	0	0	13	2	18
Polonia B	6	4	0	2	8	3	12
Ruch	6	4	0	2	7	4	12
Legia	6	3	2	1	6	1	11
Lech	6	3	1	2	15	10	10
Lechia	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Piast	6	3	0	3	8	11	9
Slask	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Korona	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Odra	6	2	0	4	5	7	6
Polonia W	6	2	0	4	7	12	6
Cracovia	6	1	3	2	5	10	6
Belchatow	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Arka	6	1	1	4	4	6	4
Zaglebie	6	1	0	5	3	15	3
Jagiellonia*	6	3	1	2	10	7	0

**10pts deducted for the club's involvement in a corruption scandal*

ROMANIA

Dinamo go through despite fan trouble

Dinamo Bucharest must play their opening two home games in the Europa League behind closed doors after supporters caused the opening leg of their fourth qualifying round tie at home to Slovan Liberec to be abandoned.

The game – which was stopped soon after the Czech Republic club scored to make it 2-0 in the 84th minute – was awarded as a 3-0 victory to the visitors.

However, Dinamo won the return 3-0 and progressed to the group stage by winning 9-8 on penalties.

RUSSIA

Ramos in charge

Former Real Madrid and Tottenham boss Juande Ramos has taken over from Brazilian Zico, who was sacked as coach of CSKA Moscow.

Russian assignment...Ramos

Ramos, who won two successive UEFA Cups during his time at Sevilla, has initially agreed a deal until the end of the Russian season which finishes in November.

However, if CSKA progress to the Champions League knockout stage then his contract with the club is likely to be extended.

Meanwhile, Argentinian striker Alejandro Dominguez, who joined Rubin Kazan from Zenit St Petersburg in March, has scored seven penalties in his last seven league games for the top of the table side.

The only team he has failed to score from the spot against during that run has been Terek Grozny...and he still managed to get on the scoresheet against them from open play.

PORTUGAL

Aug 21: Olhanense 0 Uniao Leiria 0.
Aug 22: Academica 1 Pacos Ferreira 1; Sporting Lisbon 1 Sporting Braga 2.
Aug 23: Maritimo 1 Leixoes 0; Rio Ave 1 Setubal 0; Guimaraes 0 Benfica 1; Porto 3 Nacional 0.
Aug 24: Belenenses 2 Naval 0.
Aug 29: Pacos Ferreira 0 Guimaraes 0; Naval 1 Porto 3.
Aug 30: Leixoes 0 Rio Ave 0; Uniao Leiria 0 Maritimo 0; Sporting Braga 3 Belenenses 1; Academica 0 Sporting Lisbon 2.
Aug 31: Nacional 1 Olhanense 1; Benfica 8 Setubal 1.
Sep 11: Guimaraes 3 Naval 0.
Sep 12: Porto 4 Leixoes 1; Rio Ave 2 Nacional 0.
Sep 13: Belenenses 0 Benfica 4; Setubal 0 Uniao Leiria 4; Olhanense 2 Academica 1; Sporting Lisbon 1 Pacos Ferreira 0; Maritimo 1 Sporting Braga 2.

PORTUGAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
S Braga	4	4	0	0	8	3	12
Benfica	4	3	1	0	14	2	10
Porto	4	3	1	0	11	3	10
Rio Ave	4	2	2	0	4	1	8
Sporting L	4	2	1	1	5	3	7
Uniao Leiria	4	1	3	0	5	1	6
Olhanense	4	1	3	0	3	2	6
Guimaraes	4	1	2	1	3	1	5
Maritimo	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Belenenses	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
P Ferreira	4	0	3	1	2	3	3
Leixoes	4	0	2	2	1	5	2
Nacional	4	0	2	2	2	7	2
Academica	4	0	1	3	2	6	1
Naval	4	0	1	3	1	8	1
Setubal	4	0	1	3	1	13	1

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Aug 21: Drogheda 0 Cork 1; Bohemians 5 Galway 0; Bray 2 Sligo 2.
Aug 22: Shamrock 2 Dundalk 2.
Aug 23: Derry 1 St Patrick's 0.
Aug 28: Bray 0 Derry 1; Galway 0 Shamrock 1.
Aug 30: St Patrick's 1 Drogheda 0.
Sep 1: Sligo 1 Bohemians 0; Derry 1 Galway 3.
Sep 4: Bohemians 1 Bray 2; Cork 4 Galway 2; Derry 3 Dundalk 0; Drogheda 2 Sligo 2; Shamrock 1 St Patrick's 0.
Sep 12: Dundalk 1 Cork 0.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bohemians	27	17	4	6	43	15	55
Shamrock	27	15	9	3	36	19	54
Derry	27	14	5	8	37	20	47
Cork	27	14	5	8	31	18	47
Dundalk	27	11	4	12	32	35	37
Galway	27	9	4	14	25	40	31
St Patrick's	26	9	2	15	20	35	29
Sligo	27	6	8	13	27	42	26
Drogheda	27	5	9	13	21	33	24
Bray	26	5	8	13	22	37	23

ROMANIA

Aug 21: Brasov 2 Universitatea 0; Rapid 2 Alba Iulia 0; Politehnica 2 Astra 0.
Aug 22: Gaz Metan 0 Ceahlaul 2; Urziceni 0 Timisoara 0.
Aug 23: Otelul 0 Steaua 1; Gloria 1 Vaslui 3; Pandurii 2 International 3; Dinamo 1 CFR 0.
Aug 28: International 0 Brasov 3; Otelul 1 Urzieceni 4.
Aug 29: Ceahlaul 1 Pandurii 2; Astra 3 Rapid 1; Universitatea 5 Gloria 1.
Aug 30: CFR 2 Gaz Metan 0; Alba Iulia 3 Timisoara 3; Vaslui 2 Politehnica 1; Steaua 0 Dinamo 1.
Sep 11: Pandurii 1 CFR 0; Brasov 1 Ceahlaul 0.
Sep 12: Urziceni 1 Alba Iulia 0; Dinamo 0 Otelul 1; Gloria 0 International 1.
Sep 13: Rapid 3 Vaslui 2; Gaz Metan 2 Steaua 4; Timisoara 0 Astra 0.
Sep 14: Politehnica 1 Universitatea 0.

ROMANIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brasov	6	4	2	0	9	2	14
Urziceni	6	4	1	1	7	3	13
Pandurii	6	4	0	2	7	6	12
Dinamo	6	3	1	2	6	2	10
Steaua	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
CFR	6	3	1	2	7	4	10
Vaslui	6	3	1	2	11	9	10
Timisoara	6	2	4	0	6	4	10
Rapid	6	3	0	3	10	8	9
International	6	3	0	3	7	10	9
Universitatea	6	2	1	3	8	6	7
Politehnica	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Otelul	6	2	1	3	3	6	7
Astra	6	1	3	2	3	4	6
Gaz Metan	6	2	0	4	9	13	6
Alba Iulia	6	1	2	3	6	9	5
Ceahlaul	6	1	1	4	3	9	4
Gloria	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

RUSSIA

Aug 22: Krylia Sovetov 2 Rostov 2; FC Moscow 3 Saturn 1; CSKA 2 Khimki 1; Spartak Nalchik 3 Tom 0.
Aug 23: Zenit 1 Lokomotiv 1; Dynamo 0 Rubin 3; Kuban 1 Amkar 0; Terek 2 Spartak Moscow 3.
Aug 29: Lokomotiv 4 Kuban 1; Saturn 3 Terek 0; Tom 0 FC Moscow 0.
Aug 30: Krylia Sovetov 3 Dynamo 1; Spartak Moscow 0 Rubin 3; Khimki 0 Zenit 4; Rostov 1 CSKA 0.
Aug 31: Amkar 1 Spartak Nalchik 2.
Sep 12: FC Moscow 0 Amkar 2; CSKA 3 Krylia Sovetov 0; Rubin 5 Saturn 1; Kuban 2 Khimki 1.
Sep 13: Dynamo 1 Spartak Moscow 1; Spartak Nalchik 0 Lokomotiv 1; Zenit 2 Rostov 0; Terek 4 Tom 0.

RUSSIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rubin	21	14	4	3	47	14	46
Spartak M	21	12	4	5	38	22	40
CSKA	21	11	3	7	32	20	36
Lokomotiv	21	9	8	4	28	20	35
Zenit	21	9	7	5	35	22	34
FC Moscow	21	9	7	5	24	16	34
Dynamo	21	9	4	8	22	25	31
Saturn	21	8	5	8	25	29	29
Krylia Sovetov	21	8	4	9	24	28	28
Terek	21	7	6	8	26	32	27
Rostov	21	6	8	7	15	20	26
Tom	21	6	6	9	18	27	24
Amkar	21	5	6	10	20	30	21
Kuban	21	5	6	10	15	31	21
Spartak N	21	3	8	10	18	24	17
Khimki	21	2	4	15	16	43	10

SCOTLAND

Aug 22: Falkirk 1 Hibernian 3; Celtic 5 St Johnstone 2; Hamilton 0 Aberdeen 3; Motherwell 3 Kilmarnock 1; St Mirren 0 Dundee United 0.
Aug 23: Hearts 1 Rangers 2.
Aug 29: Aberdeen 0 Motherwell 0; Dundee United 2 Falkirk 1; Kilmarnock 1 St Mirren 2; Rangers 4 Hamilton 1.
Aug 30: Hibernian 0 Celtic 1; St Johnstone 2 Hearts 2.
Sep 12: Celtic 1 Dundee United 1; Motherwell 0 Rangers 0; St Mirren 1 St Johnstone 1.
Sep 13: Hamilton 2 Hibernian 0.
Sep 14: Falkirk 0 Aberdeen 0.

SCOTLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	4	3	1	0	10	3	10
Celtic	4	3	1	0	10	4	10
Dundee Utd	4	2	2	0	5	2	8
Motherwell	4	1	3	0	5	3	6
Hibernian	4	2	0	2	5	5	6
Aberdeen	4	1	2	1	4	3	5
St Mirren	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Kilmarnock	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
St Johnstone	4	0	3	1	7	10	3
Hamilton	4	1	0	3	3	10	3
Hearts	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Falkirk	4	0	1	3	3	9	1

SERBIA

Aug 22: Vojvodina 1 Metalac 0; Smederevo 1 Napredak 0; OFK 1 Jagodina 0; Mladi Radnik 1 Spartak 1; Borac 2 BSK 0.
Aug 23: Javor 1 Partizan 1; Hajduk 2 Cukaricki 1; Red Star 1 Rad 0.
Aug 29: Cukaricki 1 Vojvodina 3; BSK 1 Javor 0; Spartak 1 Borac 0; Jagodina 2 Mladi Radnik 0; Metalac 0 Smederevo 2.
Aug 30: Partizan 1 Hajduk 0; Napredak 1 Red Star 1; Rad 0 OFK 2.
Sep 12: Red Star 3 Metalac 0; OFK 1 Napredak 1; Mladi Radnik 0 Rad 0; Borac 2 Jagodina 1; Javor 1 Spartak 0.
Sep 13: Vojvodina 1 Smederevo 1; Cukaricki 1 Partizan 1; Hajduk 0 BSK 0.

SERBIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	4	3	1	0	8	1	10
Vojvodina	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
OFK	4	3	1	0	5	1	10
Partizan	4	2	2	0	8	2	8
Smederevo	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Javor	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
Borac	4	2	0	2	4	7	6
Napredak	4	1	2	1	4	3	5
Mladi Radnik	4	1	2	1	4	5	5
Spartak	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
BSK	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Rad	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Hajduk	4	1	1	2	2	5	4
Jagodina	4	1	0	3	3	6	3
Cukaricki	4	0	1	3	3	7	1
Metalac	4	0	0	4	0	8	0

SLOVAKIA

Aug 22: Ruzomberok 2 Spartak 1; Dubnica 3 Nitra 0; DAC 0 Dukla 2.
Aug 23: Petrzalka 1 Zilina 0; Kosice 0 Senica 1; Tatran 3 Slovan 0.
Aug 29: Senica 2 Dukla 2; Spartak 2 Petrzalka 0.
Aug 30: Nitra 2 DAC 0; Kosice 3 Ruzomberok 1; Slovan 1 Dubnica 1; Zilina 1 Tatran 0.
Sep 12: Dukla 0 Nitra 3; Ruzomberok 0 Senica 1; Tatran 1 Spartak 2; Dubnica 0 Zilina 1.
Sep 13: Petrzalka 3 Kosice 0.

SLOVAKIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nitra	9	6	2	1	11	4	20
Zilina	8	6	1	1	11	3	19
Dukla	9	4	4	1	12	6	16
Slovan	7	4	2	1	13	6	14
Spartak	9	4	1	4	14	12	13
Senica	9	4	1	4	9	15	13
Petrzalka	9	3	3	3	6	7	12
DAC	8	3	1	4	8	9	10
Dubnica	9	1	4	4	7	11	7
Tatran	9	2	1	6	7	11	7
Kosice	9	2	1	6	9	16	7
Ruzomberok	9	1	3	5	7	14	6

SLOVENIA

Aug 22: Nafta 0 Interblock 1; Gorica 1 Drava 2; Rudar 2 Celje 0.
Aug 23: Olimpija 3 Domzale 1; Maribor 1 Koper 2.
Aug 28: Domzale 2 Nafta 1.
Aug 29: Koper 2 Olimpija 1; Interblock 3 Gorica 1; Celje 2 Maribor 1.
Aug 30: Drava 1 Rudar 0.
Sep 11: Domzale 1 Koper 1.
Sep 12: Maribor 2 Drava 2; Rudar 2 Interblock 1; Nafta 2 Gorica 1; Olimpija 4 Celje 2.

SLOVENIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Koper	8	6	2	0	15	8	20
Rudar	8	6	1	1	14	5	19
Celje	8	4	1	3	11	11	13
Interblock	8	3	2	3	11	9	11
Olimpija*	8	4	0	4	13	11	10
Maribor	8	3	1	4	11	10	10
Drava	8	2	3	3	10	13	9
Nafta	8	2	1	5	9	14	7
Gorica	8	2	0	6	10	14	6
Domzale	8	1	3	4	9	18	6

**2pts deducted for missing a game during last season's second level campaign*

SPAIN

Saturday, August 29

Real Madrid 3 (Raul 26, Cristiano Ronaldo pen 35, Diarra 60)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Riki 30, Valeron 46) Att: 79,000

Zaragoza 1 (Arizmendi 74)
Tenerife 0 Att: 17,000

Sunday, August 30

Almeria 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 9,100

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Toquero 78)
Espanyol 0 Att: 38,000

Malaga 3 (Baha 34, Manu 62, Torres 89)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 30,000

Mallorca 2 (Aduriz 57, Tuni 60)
Xerez 0 Att: 10,000

Osasuna 1 (Pandiani 37)
Villarreal 1 (Cazorla 32) Att: 17,135

Racing Santander 1 (Lacen 42)
Getafe 4 (Rafa 12, Soldado 28, 33, 56) Att: 16,121

New man...Hipp

SCOTLAND

Youngest-ever Don

At the age of 16 years and four months, Aberdeen's Fraser Fyvie became the Scottish Premier League's youngest-ever debutant.

The midfielder made his historic appearance as Aberdeen beat Hamilton 3-0. He also became the youngest player to appear for the Dons' first team.

SLOVAKIA

Hipp crosses town to join Slovan

Former Czechoslovakia and Slovakia defender Michal Hipp replaced Dusan Uhrin as coach of Slovan Bratislava.

The 46-year-old, who is also assistant coach of the national team under Vladimir Weiss, left capital city rivals MFK Petrzalka to join the reigning Slovak champions.

SPAIN

A decade for Casillas

Iker Casillas celebrated 10 years as a Real Madrid player in the 3-0 win at Espanyol.

The 28-year-old goalkeeper made his debut against Athletic Bilbao on September 12, 1999, and has now made 473 appearances in all competitions for the club, missing just five league games since 2002.

Anniversary...Casillas

Valencia 2 (Mata 47, Pablo 80)
Sevilla 0 Att: 46,000

Monday, August 31
Barcelona 3 (Bojan 18, Keita 42, Ibrahimovic 82)
Sporting Gijon 0 Att: 71,932

Saturday, September 12
Atletico Madrid 1 (Jurado 43)
Racing Santander 1 (Serrano 45) Att: 39,000

Espanyol 0
Real Madrid 3 (Granero 39, Guti 77, Cristiano Ronaldo 90) Att: 39,170

Getafe 0
Barcelona 2 (Ibrahimovic 66, Messi 80) Att: 16,000

Sevilla 4 (Konko 8, Luis Fabiano 45, 86, Perotti 57)
Zaragoza 1 (Arizmendi 33) Att: 42,000

Sunday, September 13
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Luis Filipe 82)
Malaga 0 Att: 15,000

Sporting Gijon 1 (Diego Castro 6)
Almeria 0 Att: 25,000

Tenerife 2 (Nino 48, Ricardo 63)
Osasuna 1 (Pandiani 52) Att: 18,300

Valladolid 2 (Nauzet 30, Manucho 66)
Valencia 4 (Silva 10, Villa 34, 55, Mata 45) Att: 18,231

Villarreal 1 (Rossi 54)
Mallorca 1 (Borja Valero 75) Att: 18,000

Xerez 0
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Prieto og 32) Att: 17,566

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Real Madrid	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Valencia	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Ath Bilbao	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Mallorca	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Malaga	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
Getafe	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Sevilla	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Dep Coruna	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Tenerife	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Zaragoza	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Sporting Gijon	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Villarreal	2	0	2	0	2	2	2
Osasuna	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Almeria	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Valladolid	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
R Santander	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
At Madrid	2	0	1	1	1	4	1
Xerez	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Espanyol	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
3 Roberto Soldado (Getafe)

SUPER CUP
1st leg
Aug 16
Athletic Bilbao 1 (De Marcos 45)
Barcelona 2 (Xavi 58, Pedro 68)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Rubinos Perez

2nd leg
Aug 23
Barcelona 3 (Messi 49, pen 67, Bojan 72)
Athletic Bilbao 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 61,083. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo
Barcelona 5-1 on agg

SWEDEN

Aug 22: AIK 1 Kalmar 1.
Aug 23: Helsingborgs 0 GAIS 1; Elfsborg 2 Orebro 1.
Aug 24: Trelleborgs 4 Halmstads 0; Djurgardens 0 IFK 0; Gefle 1 Hammarby 0; Orgryte 1 Malmo 0.
Aug 25: Hacken 5 Brommapojkarna 1.
Aug 29: AIK 1 Trelleborgs 0.
Aug 30: Kalmar 3 Hammarby 0; Halmstads 0 Hacken 4; IFK 4 Elfsborg 0.
Aug 31: Orebro 2 Gefle 0; GAIS 1 Djurgardens 1; Brommapojkarna 1 Orgryte 2; Malmo 0 Helsingborgs 0.
Sep 12: Trelleborgs 1 Kalmar 2; Elfsborg 2 GAIS 2.
Sep 13: Gefle 0 IFK 3; Hammarby 0 Orebro 1; Helsingborgs 0 Brommapojkarna 1.
Sep 14: Hacken 0 AIK 2; Djurgardens 1 Malmo 2.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIK	22	13	5	4	23	14	44
IFK	22	13	4	5	41	17	43
Kalmar	22	12	5	5	40	22	41
Elfsborg	22	11	7	4	36	26	40
Helsingborgs	22	11	3	8	31	24	36
Orebro	22	10	6	6	26	19	36
Hacken	22	10	5	7	35	25	35
Gefle	22	8	7	7	23	26	31
Malmo	22	7	8	7	20	16	29
Trelleborgs	22	8	5	9	27	24	29
Bromm'karna	22	6	6	10	25	36	24
Halmstads	21	5	7	9	18	30	22
GAIS	22	4	9	9	25	30	21
Hammarby	22	5	4	13	16	29	19
Djurgardens	22	4	4	14	13	41	16
Orgryte	21	3	5	13	14	34	14

SWITZERLAND

Aug 22: Zurich 4 Lucerne 0; St Gallen 1 Aarau 0.
Aug 23: Young Boys 3 Sion 1; Xamax 2 Basle 2; Bellinzona 0 Grasshopper 0.
Aug 29: Aarau 1 Zurich 1; Lucerne 3 St Gallen 1.
Aug 30: Basle 1 Young Boys 2; Sion 3 Bellinzona 1.
Aug 31: Grasshopper 1 Xamax 3.
Sep 12: St Gallen 1 Sion 1; Zurich 4 Grasshopper 3.
Sep 13: Aarau 2 Lucerne 4; Bellinzona 2 Basle 3; Xamax 3 Young Boys 0.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Young Boys	9	7	1	1	20	11	22
Lucerne	9	5	1	3	16	16	16
Xamax	9	4	3	2	19	10	15
Zurich	9	4	3	2	20	15	15
St Gallen	9	3	4	2	11	9	13
Sion	9	3	3	3	17	16	12
Basle	9	3	3	3	13	15	12
Grasshopper	9	2	1	6	12	17	7
Bellinzona	9	1	3	5	13	19	6
Aarau	9	1	2	6	7	20	5

TURKEY

Aug 22: Istanbul BB 0 Eskisehirspor 0; Bursaspor 1 Ankaragucu 0; Genclerbirligi 0 Besiktas 0.
Aug 23: Manisaspor 1 Trabzonspor 0; Galatasaray 4 Kayserispor 1; Antalyaspor 2 Kasimpasa 0; Gaziantepspor 1 Ankarospor 1.
Aug 24: Diyarbakirspor 1 Fenerbahce 3.
Aug 28: Besiktas 0 Gaziantepspor 0.
Aug 29: Eskisehirspor 2 Antalyaspor 1; Ankaragucu 2 Istanbul BB 2; Kayserispor 3 Denizlispor 0.
Aug 30: Sivasspor 0 Diyarbakirspor 2; Kasimpasa 0 Genclerbirligi 4; Trabzonspor 1 Bursaspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Manisaspor 1.
Aug 31: Ankaraspor 0 Galatasaray 2.
Sep 12: Galatasaray 3 Besiktas 0; Denizlispor 0 Diyarbakirspor 0; Manisaspor 3 Sivasspor 1.
Sep 13: Istanbul BB 1 Trabzonspor 6; Gaziantepspor 1 Kasimpasa 0; Genclerbirligi 2 Eskisehirspor 2; Antalyaspor 1 Ankaragucu 0; Bursaspor 0 Fenerbahce 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Galatasaray	5	5	0	0	16	4	15
Fenerbahce	5	5	0	0	11	2	15
Eskisehirspor	5	2	3	0	7	5	9
Manisaspor	5	2	2	1	6	4	8
Diyarbakirspor	5	2	2	1	7	6	8
Trabzonspor	5	2	1	2	10	6	7
Genclerbirligi	5	1	4	0	7	3	7
Bursaspor	5	2	1	2	6	6	7
Gaziantepspor	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Antalyaspor	5	2	0	3	4	5	6
Besiktas	5	1	3	1	3	4	6
Istanbul BB	5	1	3	1	7	10	6
Kayserispor	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
Ankaraspor	4	1	2	1	3	4	5
Ankaragucu	5	0	3	2	5	7	3
Denizlispor	4	0	1	3	1	9	1
Sivasspor	4	0	0	4	2	10	0
Kasimpasa	5	0	0	5	2	12	0

UKRAINE

Aug 22: Zorya 2 Zakarpattya 0; Obolon 1 Dnipro 0; Kryvbas 2 Chornomorets 3; Illichivets 2 Tavriya 2.
Aug 23: Arsenal 0 Karpaty 0; Metalurh Donetsk 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0; Vorskla 1 Dynamo 1.
Aug 29: Zakarpattya 2 Arsenal 1; Chornomorets 0 Dnipro 1; Kryvbas 0 Illichivets 2.
Aug 30: Tavriya 1 Vorskla 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Metalist 2; Karpaty 5 Obolon 0.
Aug 31: Shakhtar 3 Zorya 1; Dynamo 3 Metalurh Donetsk 1.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamo	6	5	1	0	21	4	16
Shakhtar	5	4	1	0	13	3	13
Tavriya	6	4	1	1	10	10	13
Metalist	5	4	0	1	7	2	12
Karpaty	6	3	2	1	13	4	11
Dnipro	6	3	2	1	5	2	11
Illichivets	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Arsenal	6	2	3	1	9	5	9
Obolon	6	3	0	3	6	11	9
Metalurh D	6	2	2	2	11	10	8
Vorskla	6	1	3	2	7	7	6
Metalurh Z	6	1	1	4	4	11	4
Zorya	6	1	1	4	3	11	4
Chornomorets	6	1	0	5	5	14	3
Zakarpattya	6	1	0	5	4	13	3
Kryvbas	6	0	0	6	5	16	0

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Preliminary round
1st legs - Aug 4-Sep 2; 2nd legs - Aug 18-27
Alianza Atletico (Per) v Anzoategui (Ven)
0-0
Atletico Mineiro (Bra) v Goias (Bra)
1-1
Atletico Paranaense (Bra) v Botafogo (Bra)
0-0
Blooming (Bol) v River Plate (Uru)
0-3, 1-2 (agg 1-5)
Boca Juniors (Arg) v Velez Sarsfield (Arg)
1-1
Cerro Porteno (Par) v La Paz (Bol)
2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1)
Fluminense (Bra) v Flamengo (Bra)
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1; Fluminense on away goals)
La Equidad (Col) v Union Espanola (Chl)
2-2, 0-1 (agg 2-3)
LDU Quito (Ecu) v Libertad (Par)
1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)
Liverpool (Uru) v Cienciano (Per)
0-0, 0-2 (agg 0-2)
River Plate (Arg) v Lanus (Arg)
1-2
Tigre (Arg) v San Lorenzo (Arg)
2-1
Universidad de Chile (Chl) v Deportivo Cali (Col)
2-1, 1-0 (agg 3-1)
Vitoria (Bra) v Coritiba (Bra)
2-0, 0-2 (agg 2-2; Vitoria 5-3 on pens)
Zamora (Ven) v Emelec (Ecu)
0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)

Remaining 2nd leg ties were due to be played Sep 15-17

Bye to last 16: Internacional (Bra; holders)

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP
Friday, August 21
Gimnasia La Plata 0
Godoy Cruz 2 (Jara 4, Higuain 49)

Independiente 0
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Insaurralde 76)

Saturday, August 22
Arsenal 0
Estudiantes 2 (Boselli 8, Cellay 45)

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Pereira 37)
Tigre 2 (Lazzaro 21, 52)

Rosario Central 1 (Nunez 25)
Racing Club 0

San Lorenzo 3 (Bergessio 2, Menseguez 47, Pintos 90)
Atletico Tucuman 1 (Barone 12)

Sunday, August 23
Banfield 2 (Silva 2, Fernandez 33)
River Plate 0

Boca Juniors 2 (Marino 46, 51)
Argentinos Juniors 2 (Hauche 30, Gianni 45)

Colon 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Cristaldo 84)

Banned...Jauregui

ARGENTINA

Central go clear

Rosario Central won 1-0 at Chacarita Juniors to lead the opening championship just months after narrowly avoiding relegation.

BOLIVIA

Kung fu fighting

Former international Sergio Jauregui has been banned for one year after an Eric Cantona-style kung fu kick on an opponent.

The Blooming defender reacted to an alleged elbow from Oriente Petrolero striker Leonardo Medina and, after the pair were sent off for wrestling, Jauregui launched his attack in the tunnel and put Medina in hospital.

Jauregui later visited Medina to apologise and offered to pay his medical fees.

Great start...Love (left)

BRAZIL

All they need is Love

Despite being booked in the first minute, former CSKA Moscow striker Vagner Love enjoyed a perfect homecoming as he scored what turned out to be the winning goal in Palmeiras' 2-1 defeat of Barueri, helping his new club to stay top of the league.

In the second division, Vasco da Gama striker Aloisio

Huracan 1 (Diaz 71)
Lanus 2 (Salcedo pen 12, 31)

Friday, August 28
Racing Club 1 (Ramirez pen 90)
Colon 1 (Nieto 65)

Tigre 1 (Morel pen 19)
Rosario Central 2 (Zelaya 21, Franzoia 90)

Saturday, August 29
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Hauche 62)
Banfield 1 (Silva 8)

Estudiantes 3 (Salgueiro 18, Boselli 69, Perez 77)
Gimnasia La Plata 0

Godoy Cruz 1 (Vega 26)
San Lorenzo 1 (Gomez pen 90)

Velez Sarsfield 3 (Otamendi 24, Lopez 62, Moralez 78)
Arsenal 1 (Alvarez pen 70)

Sunday, August 30
Atletico Tucuman 2 (Montiglio 21, Rodriguez 81)
Independiente 4 (Gandin 64, Rodriguez 68, 85, Nunez 90)

Lanus 1 (Pelletieri 22)
Boca Juniors 2 (Caceres 17, Palermo 80)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Insaurralde 41)
Huracan 0

River Plate 4 (Buonanotte 5, Cabral 32, Villalva 68, Ortega 87)
Chacarita Juniors 3 (Alustiza 22, pen 45, Parra 53)

Wednesday, September 2
Argentinos Juniors 0
Lanus 0

Arsenal 0
Racing Club 0

San Lorenzo 2 (Romagnoli 76, Gonzalez 79)
Estudiantes 2 (Boselli pen 30, Benitez 35)

Thursday, September 3
Boca Juniors 1 (Viatri 57)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Vangioni 66)

Huracan 0
Atletico Tucuman 2 (Pereyra 60, Calandria 80)

Independiente 2 (Gandin pen 65, Piatti 87)
Godoy Cruz 0

Friday, September 4
Banfield 1 (Silva 44)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Colon 5 (Fuertes 12, pen 39, 69, Nieto 54, Ramirez 56)
Tigre 1 (Lazzaro 13)

Gimnasia La Plata 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Moralez 90)

Tuesday, September 8
Rosario Central 2 (Burdisso 16, Castillejos 52)
River Plate 1 (Diaz 72)

Friday, September 11
Newell's Old Boys 0
Argentinos Juniors 1 (Ortigoza pen 65)

Racing Club 1 (Maldonado og 25)
Gimnasia La Plata 1 (Romero 77)

Saturday, September 12
Atletico Tucuman 2 (Pereyra 14, Escobar 68)
Boca Juniors 0

Chacarita Juniors 0
Rosario Central 1 (Zelaya 33)

Tigre 1 (Gimenez 15)
Arsenal 2 (Alvarez 18, Jara 32)

Velez Sarsfield 0
San Lorenzo 0

Sunday, September 13
Estudiantes 2 (Boselli 3, Diaz 87)
Independiente 1 (Gandin 11)

Godoy Cruz 1 (Jara 36)
Huracan 1 (Diaz 83)

Lanus 1 (Salcedo 26)
Banfield 2 (Silva 31, pen 56)

River Plate 0
Colon 0

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosario	4	4	0	0	6	2	12
Estudiantes	4	3	1	0	9	3	10
Banfield	4	3	1	0	6	2	10
Velez	4	3	1	0	5	1	10
Newell's	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
Independiente	4	2	0	2	7	5	6
San Lorenzo	4	1	3	0	6	4	6
Argentinos Jrs	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
At Tucuman	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Colon	4	1	2	1	6	3	5
Godoy Cruz	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Boca Juniors	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Lanus	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
River Plate	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Arsenal	4	1	1	2	3	6	4
Racing Club	4	0	3	1	2	3	3
Tigre	4	1	0	3	5	10	3
Huracan	4	0	1	3	2	6	1
Gimnasia LP	4	0	1	3	1	7	1
Chacarita Jrs	4	0	0	4	4	8	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
5 Santiago Silva (Banfield)
4 Mauro Boselli (Estudiantes)
3 Esteban Fuertes (Colon)
3 Leandro Lazzaro (Tigre)
3 Santiago Salcedo (Lanus)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 19: Blooming 2 Bolivar 1.
Aug 23: Bolivar 3 The Strongest 1; San Jose 2 La Paz 2; Real Potosi 4 Nacional 1; Real Mamore 1 Universitario 0; Aurora 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1; Oriente 2 Blooming 2.
Aug 26: Real Potosi 4 La Paz 2; San Jose 1 Nacional 1; The Strongest 2 Real Mamore 1; Oriente 2 Aurora 0.
Aug 27: Jorge Wilstermann 0 Bolivar 2.
Aug 29: Nacional 0 Universitario 0.
Aug 30: La Paz 3 Oriente 0; Aurora 0 The Strongest 1; Bolivar 2 San Jose 2; Real Mamore 3 Real Potosi 1; Blooming 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1.
Sep 2: Real Mamore 2 La Paz 0.
Sep 3: Universitario 2 Blooming 0.
Sep 13: Blooming 2 Nacional 1; Jorge Wilstermann 1 San Jose 0; Real Mamore 3 Aurora 0; Real Potosi 3 Oriente 0; The Strongest 3 La Paz 2; Universitario 0 Bolivar 0.

BOLIVIA – CLOSING – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	11	6	4	1	21	12	22
Blooming	11	5	3	3	15	15	18
San Jose	11	3	6	2	23	15	15
Universitario	11	4	3	4	9	12	15
J Wilstermann	11	3	3	5	12	14	12
Nacional	11	2	2	7	9	19	8

BOLIVIA – CLOSING – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Potosi	11	7	1	3	23	13	22
The Strongest	11	6	3	2	19	14	21
Oriente	11	4	4	3	11	12	16
Real Mamore	11	4	1	6	13	16	13
La Paz	11	2	4	5	16	22	10
Aurora	11	2	2	7	7	14	8

BRAZIL

Aug 19: Santos 1 Gremio 0; Vitoria 2 Atletico Paranaense 1; Botafogo 1 Santo Andre 2; Barueri 2 Sport Recife 1; Sao Paulo 1 Fluminense 0; Coritiba 1 Palmeiras 0; Internacional 1 Corinthians 2.
Aug 20: Flamengo 1 Cruzeiro 2; Nautico 2 Goias 0; Atletico Mineiro 2 Avai 2.
Aug 22: Palmeiras 2 Internacional 1; Santo Andre 1 Coritiba 0; Sport Recife 2 Vitoria 0.
Aug 23: Corinthians 3 Botafogo 3; Atletico Paranaense 1 Sao Paulo 0; Gremio 4 Atletico Mineiro 1; Fluminense 0 Barueri 0; Goias 2 Santos 1; Cruzeiro 4 Nautico 2; Avai 3 Flamengo 0.
Aug 26: Santos 3 Internacional 3; Barueri 2 Corinthians 2.
Aug 27: Botafogo 1 Cruzeiro 1.
Aug 29: Coritiba 2 Avai 0; Flamengo 3 Santo Andre 0; Nautico 3 Atletico Paranaense 0.
Aug 30: Sao Paulo 0 Palmeiras 0; Santos 2 Fluminense 0; Atletico Mineiro 1 Sport Recife 1; Internacional 4 Goias 0; Vitoria 3 Cruzeiro 3; Botafogo 3 Gremio 3.
Sep 2: Internacional 3 Atletico Mineiro 0; Corinthians 2 Santos 1.
Sep 5: Palmeiras 2 Barueri 1; Gremio 1 Vitoria 1; Sport Recife 2 Botafogo 1.
Sep 6: Atletico Paranaense 0 Flamengo 0; Goias 2 Coritiba 2; Cruzeiro 1 Sao Paulo 2; Santo Andre 1 Atletico Mineiro 2; Fluminense 1 Nautico 1; Avai 0 Internacional 2.
Sep 12: Sao Paulo 2 Avai 0; Flamengo 3 Sport Recife 0.
Sep 13: Santos 1 Santo Andre 0; Internacional 2 Cruzeiro 3; Vitoria 3 Palmeiras 2; Atletico Mineiro 2 Atletico Paranaense 1; Barueri 3 Goias 1; Nautico 0 Gremio 2; Botafogo 0 Fluminense 0.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeiras	24	12	8	4	37	23	44
Internacional	24	13	4	7	47	30	43
Sao Paulo	24	12	7	5	33	23	43
At Mineiro	24	11	7	6	40	34	40
Goias	24	11	6	7	42	38	39
Gremio	24	10	6	8	43	28	36
Corinthians	23	10	6	7	32	30	36
Barueri	24	9	9	6	46	34	36
Santos	24	9	8	7	40	38	35
Avai	24	9	7	8	33	30	34
Flamengo	24	9	7	8	35	36	34
Vitoria	24	9	6	9	36	38	33
Cruzeiro	24	9	5	10	32	38	32
At Paranaense	24	8	4	12	24	36	28
Coritiba	23	7	5	11	31	35	26
Nautico	24	6	7	11	30	44	25
Santo Andre	24	6	6	12	25	36	24
Botafogo	24	4	12	8	34	41	24
Sport Recife	24	5	5	14	30	44	20
Fluminense	24	3	9	12	22	36	18

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
League stage

Aug 21: Audax Italiano 1 Curico Unido 1.
Aug 22: O'Higgins 2 Colo Colo 2; Palestino 3 Union Espanola 3; Huachipato 2 Cobresal 1.
Aug 23: Nublense 1 Dep La Serena 0; Cobreloa 0 Univ Catolica 2; Santiago Morning 3 Municipal 2; Univ de Chile 1 Everton 1.
Aug 28: Everton 0 Dep La Serena 1.
Aug 29: Univ Catolica 2 Colo Colo 1; Univ de Concepcion 2 Palestino 0; Union Espanola 2 Cobreloa 0.
Aug 30: Rangers 0 Curico Unido 0; Univ de Chile 3 Audax Italiano 2; O'Higgins 2 Huachipato 1; Cobresal 3 Santiago Morning 1; Municipal 1 Nublense 3.
Sep 6: Everton 1 O'Higgins 1; Rangers 1 Univ de Concepcion 1; Union Espanola 2 Audax Italiano 4.
Sep 12: Dep La Serena 0 Univ de Concepcion 1; Everton 1 Univ Catolica 1; Huachipato 0 Rangers 3; Palestino 0 Santiago Morning 1; Nublense 0 Univ de Chile 2.
Sep 13: Colo Colo 1 Union Espanola 1; Cobreloa 5 O'Higgins 1; Curico Unido 2 Cobresal 1; Audax Italiano 2 Municipal 0.

CHILE – CLOSING – LEAGUE STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	9	6	2	1	17	10	20
Univ Catolica	9	5	4	0	13	4	19
Univ de Chile	9	5	3	1	17	10	18
U Concepcion	9	5	1	3	13	11	16
Everton	9	4	3	2	9	6	15
S Morning	9	5	0	4	12	13	15
U Espanola	9	4	2	3	16	15	14
Curico Unido	9	3	5	1	9	8	14
Colo Colo	9	3	3	3	14	11	12
Dep La Serena	9	4	0	5	10	10	12
Cobresal	9	3	2	4	9	9	11
Rangers	9	3	2	4	11	13	11
Palestino	9	2	4	3	10	12	10
Cobreloa	9	3	0	6	13	16	9
Huachipato	9	3	0	6	11	15	9
O'Higgins	9	2	3	4	8	14	9
Nublense	9	2	2	5	7	11	8
Municipal	9	0	2	7	9	20	2

was rushed to hospital after choking on chewing gum in his debut against Brasiliense. The former Saint-Etienne and Paris St-Germain striker was involved in a clash of heads with an opponent and then lost consciousness as a piece of gum blocked his airway.

Flamengo striker Emerson will join UAE club Al Ain next season to provide experience for their Asian Champions League campaign.

Going...Emerson

URUGUAY

Liverpool score three goals in eight minutes

A stunning comeback from three goals down has helped 10-man Liverpool from the capital, Montevideo, to become early pace-setters in the opening championship.

Trailing 3-0 to Cerrito with just over 20 minutes left, and having had Michael Acosta sent off, they scored four times in eight minutes to win 4-3 with goals from Carlos Macchi, Paolo Patritti, Mathias Riquero and Emiliano Alfaro.

Elsewhere, Julio Ribas was sacked as coach of Penarol after just nine months in charge following the 2-1 defeat at Racing.

Former favourite Pablo Bengoechea, who helped the club win five successive titles between 1993 and 1997, is set to replace him.

Comeback...Macchi

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP
Regular season

Aug 22: Indep Santa Fe 3 La Equidad 0; Once Caldas 0 Millonarios 0; Cartagena 2 At Junior 2.
Aug 23: At Nacional 1 Cucuta 0; Dep Pasto 3 Tolima 1; Dep Cali 2 Quindio 1; Chico 1 America 1; Envigado 0 Pereira 0; At Huila 0 Indep Medellin 2.
Aug 29: Quindio 3 Cartagena 2; At Nacional 1 At Huila 1; Millonarios 1 Dep Pasto 2.
Aug 30: Cucuta 2 Once Caldas 0; Tolima 0 Dep Cali 3; At Junior 5 Chico 2; America 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; La Equidad 2 Envigado 2; Pereira 1 Indep Medellin 0.
Sep 11: Tolima 1 At Huila 0.
Sep 12: Indep Santa Fe 4 Millonarios 2; Pereira 4 Once Caldas 1.
Sep 13: Envigado 1 Cucuta 1; Indep Medellin 3 At Nacional 1; La Equidad 1 Dep Pasto 1; America 3 Dep Cali 1; At Junior 3 Cartagena 1; Quindio 1 Chico 3.

COLOMBIA – CLOSING – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ind Medellin	9	6	0	3	16	9	18
Ind Santa Fe	9	5	2	2	18	11	17
At Huila	9	5	2	2	13	11	17
At Junior	9	5	1	3	22	15	16
Dep Pasto	9	4	3	2	12	11	15
At Nacional	9	3	5	1	12	11	14
Dep Cali	9	4	2	3	17	17	14
Pereira	9	3	4	2	10	5	13
Tolima	9	3	2	4	10	15	11
La Equidad	9	1	7	1	12	14	10
Millonarios	9	2	4	3	10	12	10
Cartagena	9	2	4	3	13	16	10
Quindio	9	3	1	5	12	15	10
America	9	1	6	2	11	11	9
Cucuta	9	2	3	4	8	8	9
Chico	9	2	3	4	15	18	9
Once Caldas	9	2	2	5	8	14	8
Envigado	9	0	5	4	15	21	5

ECUADOR

2nd stage

Aug 19: LDU Quito 0 Dep Quito 0; Emelec 2 Barcelona 2.
Aug 22: LDU Quito 2 LDU Portoviejo 0; Olmedo 0 Tecnico Univ 0.
Aug 23: Macara 0 Dep Cuenca 0; Espoli 2 Emelec 0; Manta 2 Dep Quito 0; Barcelona 1 El Nacional 1.
Aug 28: Dep Quito 2 Manta 0.
Aug 29: El Nacional 1 Barcelona 1; Dep Cuenca 0 Macara 0; Tecnico Univ 3 Olmedo 3; LDU Portoviejo 0 LDU Quito 4.
Sep 11: Espoli 2 Manta 0.
Sep 12: Barcelona 1 Dep Cuenca 1; LDU Portoviejo 1 El Nacional 0; Tecnico Univ 0 Dep Quito 1.
Sep 13: LDU Quito 1 Macara 1; Olmedo 2 Emelec 0.

ECUADOR – 2ND STAGE – GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	8	4	4	0	13	4	16
El Nacional	8	3	2	3	10	5	11
Dep Cuenca	8	2	5	1	6	5	11
LDU P'viejo	8	3	1	4	4	12	10
Macara	8	2	3	3	7	7	9
Barcelona	8	1	5	2	10	11	8

ECUADOR – 2ND STAGE – GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Quito	8	5	1	2	8	4	16
Manta	8	3	3	2	9	8	12
Olmedo	8	2	4	2	9	9	10
Espoli	7	3	0	4	8	10	9
Emelec	7	2	2	3	7	9	8
Tecnico Univ	8	1	2	5	7	14	5

PARAGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 21: 3 de Febrero 2 Libertad 2.
Aug 22: Tacuary 0 Nacional 2.
Aug 23: Sportivo Luqueno 1 Olimpia 5; Rubio Nu 0 Guarani 0; Sol de America 0 2 de Mayo 1; 12 de Octubre 1 Cerro Porteno 1.
Aug 28: 2 de Mayo 1 Sportivo Luqueno 0; Tacuary 0 Rubio Nu 2.
Aug 29: Sol de America 0 3 de Febrero 1; Nacional 1 12 de Octubre 0; Guarani 1 Libertad 0.
Aug 30: Cerro Porteno 1 Olimpia 0.
Sep 3: Sportivo Luqueno 1 Guarani 1; 12 de Octubre 1 2 de Mayo 0; Sol de America 1 Tacuary 2; Libertad 2 Cerro Porteno 1.
Sep 4: Rubio Nu 1 Nacional 3; 3 de Febrero 1 Olimpia 4.
Sep 11: 2 de Mayo 0 Rubio Nu 1; Guarani 1 12 de Octubre 0.
Sep 12: Tacuary 3 3 de Febrero 1; Nacional 2 Sol de America 1; Cerro Porteno 0 Sportivo Luqueno 2.
Sep 13: Olimpia 0 Libertad 2.

PARAGUAY – CLOSING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	8	5	2	1	13	5	17
Nacional	8	5	2	1	11	4	17
Olimpia	8	5	0	3	13	6	15
Rubio Nu	8	4	3	1	8	5	15
Guarani	8	4	3	1	5	2	15
3 de Febrero	8	3	3	2	9	11	12
2 de Mayo	8	3	1	4	8	5	10
Tacuary	8	3	1	4	7	13	10
S Luqueno	8	2	2	4	8	12	8
Cerro Porteno	8	1	4	3	6	10	7
12 de Octubre	8	1	1	6	3	10	4
Sol America	8	0	2	6	4	12	2

PERU

Regular season

Aug 19: Sport Ancash 2 Alianza Lima 1; Alianza Atletico 1 Inti Gas 3; Sporting Cristal 1 Juan Aurich 0; Jose Galvez 1 Huancayo 1; Melgar 1 Cesar Vallejo 1; Colegio Nacional 1 Total Chalaco 0; Universitario 0 Coronel Bolognesi 0.
Aug 23: Universitario 1 Cesar Vallejo 2; Sporting Cristal 3 Huancayo 1; Total Chalaco 1 Sport Ancash 2; Alianza Atletico 0 Universidad SMP 0; Inti Gas 1 Cienciano 1; Colegio Nacional 1 Alianza Lima 2; Juan Aurich 3 Jose Galvez 0.
Aug 26: Cienciano 1 Universidad SMP 1; Total Chalaco 2 Coronel Bolognesi 2.
Aug 29: Huancayo 7 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Jose Galvez 0 Universitario 1; Melgar 1 Juan Aurich 3; Cesar Vallejo 1 Sporting Cristal 0; Cienciano 2 Total Chalaco 2; Sport Ancash 2 Alianza Atletico 0; Universidad SMP 0 Colegio Nacional 0; Alianza Lima 2 Inti Gas 1.
Sep 2: Coronel Bolognesi 3 Melgar 2.

PERU – REGULAR – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juan Aurich	30	15	10	5	46	31	55
Universitario	30	15	9	6	37	22	54
Al Lima	30	15	6	9	38	31	51
Huancayo	30	14	6	10	46	32	48
Cesar Vallejo	30	13	9	8	41	33	48
Univ SMP*	30	12	12	6	44	30	47
S Cristal	30	12	6	12	53	36	42
Cienciano	30	10	12	8	41	38	42
Inti Gas	30	11	8	11	36	31	41
Melgar	30	11	8	11	36	41	41
Jose Galvez	30	11	6	13	28	36	39
Total Chalaco	30	9	10	11	39	38	37
Col Nacional	30	9	4	17	24	39	31
Al Atletico	30	7	9	14	28	41	30
Sport Ancash	30	7	6	17	25	50	27
C Bolognesi	30	3	11	16	25	58	20

**1pt deducted*

Division split into two groups of eight – the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 5th etc in the regular season in one, those finishing 2nd, 4th, 6th etc in the other. All points and the goals record carried forward

Group stage

Sep 12: Huancayo 0 Alianza Atletico 0; Universitario 0 Coronel Bolognesi 0; Sporting Cristal 2 Inti Gas 1; Juan Aurich 2 Cesar Vallejo 1; Colegio Nacional 0 Alianza Lima 3.
Sep 13: Total Chalaco 2 Universidad SMP 2; Melgar 0 Cienciano 0; Sport Ancash 1 Jose Galvez 0.

PERU – GROUP STAGE – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juan Aurich	31	16	10	5	48	32	58
Alianza Lima	31	16	6	9	41	31	54
Cesar Vallejo	31	13	9	9	42	35	48
S Cristal	31	13	6	12	55	37	45
Inti Gas	31	11	8	12	37	33	41
Jose Galvez	31	11	6	14	28	38	39
Col Nacional	31	9	4	18	24	42	31
Sport Ancash	31	8	6	17	27	50	30

PERU – GROUP STAGE – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Universitario	31	15	10	6	37	22	55
Huancayo	31	14	7	10	46	32	49
Univ SMP*	31	12	13	6	48	34	48
Cienciano	31	10	13	8	41	38	43
Melgar	31	11	9	11	36	41	42
Total Chalaco	31	9	11	11	43	42	38
Al Atletico	31	7	10	14	28	41	31
C Bolognesi	31	3	12	16	25	58	21

**1pt deducted*

Group winners go into the championship play-off

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 22: Central Espanol 1 Racing 1; Fenix 0 River Plate 3; Cerro Largo 0 Nacional 1.
Aug 23: Cerro 1 Rampla Juniors 1; Defensor 5 Atenas 1; Tacuarembo 1 Danubio 2; Wanderers 0 Penarol 2.
Aug 26: Liverpool 4 Cerrito 3.
Aug 29: Wanderers 0 Rampla Juniors 1; Fenix 0 Racing 2; Nacional 1 Tacuarembo 0.
Aug 30: Danubio 3 Defensor 0; Central Espanol 2 River Plate 2; Cerro Largo 0 Cerrito 1; Liverpool 2 Atenas 0; Penarol 1 Cerro 1.
Sep 12: River Plate 1 Rampla Juniors 1; Racing 2 Penarol 1; Cerro Largo 1 Central Espanol 0.
Sep 13: Wanderers 2 Fenix 0; Defensor 0 Nacional 3; Tacuarembo 2 Atenas 0; Liverpool 1 Danubio 0; Cerro 0 Cerrito 2.

URUGUAY – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	3	3	0	0	7	3	9
Racing	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Nacional*	3	3	0	0	5	0	6
Danubio	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Cerrito	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
River Plate	3	1	2	0	6	3	5
Rampla Jrs	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Penarol	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Tacuarembo	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Wanderers	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Cerro Largo	3	1	0	2	1	2	3
Defensor	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
C Espanol	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
Cerro	3	0	2	1	2	4	2
Fenix	3	0	0	3	0	7	0
Atenas	3	0	0	3	1	9	0

**3pts deducted*

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 22: Yaracuyanos 2 Carabobo 0.
Aug 23: El Vigia 0 Lara 2; Llaneros 1 Estudiantes 1; Caracas 3 Monagas 1; Centro Italo 2 Trujillanos 1; Zulia 1 Zamora 1; Tachira 0 Esppor 0; Aragua 1 Mineros 0; Anzoategui 0 Italia 1.
Aug 30: El Vigia 3 Zulia 1; Carabobo 0 Estudiantes 0; Lara 1 Aragua 1; Mineros 0 Caracas 1; Monagas 2 Centro Italo 1; Trujillanos 2 Llaneros 1; Italia 0 Tachira 3; Esppor 3 Yaracuyanos 0.
Sep 3: Caracas 1 Llaneros 1.
Sep 11: Anzoategui 4 Zulia 3.
Sep 12: Aragua 2 El Vigia 1; Yaracuyanos 0 Italia 1.
Sep 13: Llaneros 0 Monagas 2; Centro Italo 2 Mineros 2; Caracas 2 Lara 0; Trujillanos 7 Carabobo 2; Estudiantes 0 Esppor 0; Tachira 2 Zamora 0.

VENEZUELA – OPENING	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italia	5	4	0	1	6	3	12
Tachira	5	3	2	0	8	0	11
Caracas	5	3	2	0	8	3	11
Esppor	5	3	2	0	7	2	11
Trujillanos	5	3	1	1	12	6	10
Yaracuyanos	5	3	0	2	7	7	9
Lara	5	2	2	1	6	4	8
Monagas	5	2	2	1	9	8	8
Aragua	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
Anzoategui	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Centro Italo	5	1	2	2	7	8	5
El Vigia	5	1	1	3	6	8	4
Mineros	5	1	1	3	3	6	4
Llaneros	5	0	3	2	3	6	3
Estudiantes	5	0	3	2	2	6	3
Zamora	4	0	2	2	2	6	2
Carabobo	5	0	2	3	2	10	2
Zulia	5	0	1	4	5	11	1

MEXICO

All change at Chivas

Former San Luis and Necaxa boss Raul Arias has replaced Francisco Ramirez and become Guadalajara's fourth coach this year.

Ramirez, who became the 10th coach to lose his job since businessman Jorge Vergara bought the club in 2002, resigned after Chivas' 4-0 defeat at San Luis. He took over in April from Omar Arellano, who was fired after just three games in charge.

Guadalajara, who will only field only Mexican players, have won just once and taken a mere five points from their first seven games in the opening championship.

Puebla remain the only unbeaten side so far, while Salvador Cabanas of Club America is top scorer with seven goals.

Top scorer...Cabanas

CAMEROON

Panthere success

Panthere Sportive beat Astres 3-2 in the Cameroon Cup Final to win the trophy for only the second time.

CONGO DR

Mazembe triumph

TP Mazembe claimed the national championship, beating Saint Eloi Lupopo home and away in the Final. Both teams will compete in next year's African Champions League, while AS Vita Club secured their place in the African Confederations Cup.

MALI

Djoliba at the double

Djoliba AC repeated last season's double success as they beat Stade Malien 1-0 in the Malien Cup Final.

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Aug 19: Arabe Unido (Pan) 4 Pachuca (Mex) 1; Houston Dynamo (USA) 1 Metapan (EIS) 0.
Aug 25: Pachuca 5 Metapan 0.
Aug 26: Arabe Unido 1 Houston Dynamo 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arabe Unido	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Houston	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Pachuca	2	1	0	1	6	4	3
Metapan	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Group B

Aug 18: Marathon (Hnd) 3 DC United (USA) 1.
Aug 20: San Juan Jabloteh (T&T) 0 Toluca (Mex) 1.
Aug 26: DC United 1 Toluca 3; Marathon 3 San Juan Jabloteh 1.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marathon	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Toluca	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
San Juan	2	0	0	2	1	4	0
DC United	2	0	0	2	2	6	0

Group C

Aug 18: Columbus Crew (USA) 2 Puerto Rico Islanders (PR) 0.
Aug 19: Cruz Azul (Mex) 2 Saprissa (CR) 0.
Aug 25: Saprissa 3 Puerto Rico Islanders 1.
Aug 26: Cruz Azul 5 Columbus Crew 0.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Saprissa	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Columbus	2	1	0	1	2	5	3
Puerto Rico Is	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group D

Aug 18: Pumas UNAM (Mex) 1 Comunicaciones (Gtm) 0.
Aug 20: Real Espana (Hnd) 1 W Connection (T&T) 0.
Aug 27: Real Espana 1 Pumas UNAM 5; W Connection 1 Comunicaciones 2.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Com'caciones	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Real Espana	2	1	0	1	2	5	3
W Connection	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Remaining matchdays: Sep 15-17; Sep 22-24; Sep 29-Oct 1; Oct 20-22

Top two in each group qualify for quarter-finals

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Aug 21: Tecos 3 Pumas 0.
Aug 22: Cruz Azul 2 America 3; Queretaro 2 Jaguares 2; Tigres 1 Monterrey 2; Pachuca 1 Puebla 2; Indios 1 San Luis 1; Atlas 0 Morelia 2; Atlante 3 Guadalajara 1.
Aug 23: Toluca 3 Santos 0.
Aug 26: Queretaro 1 Atlante 2.
Aug 29: Jaguares 1 Atlante 1; Monterrey 2 Tecos 2; Indios 1 Atlas 1; Guadalajara 2 Pachuca 2; San Luis 0 Puebla 0.
Aug 30: Pumas 3 Queretaro 0; Morelia 0 Cruz Azul 3; Santos 2 Tigres 2; America 7 Toluca 2.
Sep 4: Tecos 2 Santos 4; Atlas 0 San Luis 0.
Sep 5: Queretaro 1 Monterrey 3; Tigres 1 America 1; Cruz Azul 2 Indios 0; Pachuca 4 Jaguares 0.
Sep 6: Toluca 1 Morelia 0; Puebla 2 Guadalajara 2; Atlante 1 Pumas 0.
Sep 12: Jaguares 0 Puebla 1; Monterrey 3 Atlante 0; San Luis 4 Guadalajara 0; Indios 0 Toluca 1; Atlas 0 Cruz Azul 1.
Sep 13: Pumas 1 Pachuca 2; Morelia 2 Tigres 1; America 5 Tecos 0; Santos 2 Queretaro 0.

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 1	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	8	6	0	2	16	11	18
San Luis	7	2	4	1	10	4	10
Atlas	8	2	2	4	5	10	8
Guadalajara	7	1	2	4	11	16	5
Indios	8	0	3	5	2	12	3
Queretaro	8	0	2	6	6	18	2

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 2	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	8	5	2	1	21	9	17
Monterrey	8	5	2	1	14	6	17
Pachuca	8	5	1	2	17	11	16
Morelia	8	5	1	2	14	8	16
Puebla	8	3	5	0	9	6	14
Jaguares	8	2	2	4	6	11	8

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 3	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	8	5	0	3	15	8	15
Santos	8	4	2	2	14	12	14
Atlante	7	3	1	3	7	9	10
Tigres	8	2	3	3	11	11	9
Tecos	7	2	2	3	11	15	8
Pumas	8	1	0	7	5	15	3

UNITED STATES

Aug 19: Chicago 0 Los Angeles 2.
Aug 20: Seattle 0 New England 1.
Aug 22: DC United 0 Los Angeles 0; San Jose 1 Kansas City 0; Chivas 2 Toronto 0.
Aug 23: New York 3 Dallas 2; Chicago 3 Colorado 2; New England 3 Salt Lake 1; Houston 1 Seattle 1.
Aug 26: Salt Lake 4 Chivas 0.
Aug 29: Seattle 0 Toronto 0; New England 2 San Jose 1; Chicago 0 DC United 1; Kansas City 0 Salt Lake 1; Los Angeles 1 Chivas 0.
Aug 30: Colorado 1 Houston 0; New York 1 Columbus 0.
Sep 5: New England 2 Kansas City 4; Dallas 2 DC United 2; Colorado 1 Toronto 0.
Sep 9: DC United 1 Kansas City 0.
Sep 12: Toronto 3 Colorado 2; New York 0 Kansas City 1; DC United 1 Seattle 2; Salt Lake 1 Chicago 1; Los Angeles 3 Dallas 6.
Sep 13: Chivas 2 New England 0; Columbus 2 Houston 1.

UNITED STATES – EASTERN CONFERENCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Columbus	24	11	9	4	36	26	42
Chicago	25	10	9	6	34	29	39
DC United	26	8	12	6	39	38	36
Toronto	25	9	7	9	33	36	34
New England	23	9	6	8	28	32	33
Kansas City	24	7	6	11	25	32	27
New York	25	4	4	17	20	42	16

UNITED STATES – WESTERN CONFERENCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Houston	26	11	7	8	32	24	40
Los Angeles	25	9	11	5	31	29	38
Seattle	25	9	10	6	31	24	37
Colorado	24	10	6	8	38	30	36
Chivas	23	11	3	9	25	24	36
Salt Lake	25	9	7	9	36	28	34
Dallas	24	7	6	11	39	40	27
San Jose	22	5	5	12	27	40	20

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Aug 29: Kano Pillars (Nig) 2 Al Hilal (Sud) 1; Zesco United (Zam) 0 Al Merreikh (Sud) 0.
Sep 11: Al Hilal 3 Al Merreikh 1.
Sep 13: Kano Pillars 3 Zesco United 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Hilal	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Kano Pillars	5	3	1	1	9	7	10
Zesco United	5	1	2	2	6	7	5
Al Merreikh	5	0	2	3	4	9	2

Group B

Aug 28: Monomotapa (Zim) 0 TP Mazembe (DRC) 2.
Aug 29: Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0 Heartland (Nig) 0.
Sep 12: Etoile Sahel 2 Monomotapa 0; Heartland 2 TP Mazembe 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heartland	5	3	1	1	8	3	10
TP Mazembe	5	3	0	2	10	4	9
Etoile Sahel	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
Monomotapa	5	1	0	4	3	13	3

Remaining matchday: Sep 18-20
Top two in both groups qualify for semi-finals

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A

Aug 28: ES Setif (Alg) 6 Santos (Ang) 0.
Aug 29: AS Vita Club (DRC) 3 ENPPI (Egy) 0.
Sep 12: ENPPI 4 Santos 0.
Sep 13: AS Vita Club 2 ES Setif 1.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ES Setif	5	3	0	2	13	6	9
AS Vita Club	5	3	0	2	7	6	9
ENPPI	5	2	0	3	10	9	6
Santos	5	2	0	3	2	11	6

Group B

Aug 28: Primeiro Agosto (Ang) 3 Bayelsa United (Nig) 1.
Aug 29: Stade Malien (Mli) 2 Haras Hedood (Egy) 0.
Sep 12: Bayelsa United 2 Haras Hedood 0; Primeiro Agosto 0 Stade Malien 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stade Malien	5	2	3	0	5	2	9
P Agosto	5	2	2	1	4	5	8
Bayelsa Utd	5	2	0	3	8	6	6
Haras Hedood	5	1	1	3	2	6	4

Remaining matchday: Sep 18-20
Top two in both groups qualify for semi-finals

EGYPT

Aug 19: Gouna 1 Mansoura 1; Entag Harby 0 Assyut 0; Ittihad 1 Mokawloon 1; Mehalla 0 Masry 3; Jaish 2 Haras Hedood 3; Shorta 1 Ahly 2.
Aug 20: Ismaili 2 ENPPI 3; Zamalek 1 Petrojet 2.
Aug 23: Ahly 1 Haras Hedood 1; Ittihad 1 Jaish 3; Masry 1 Shorta 3; Assyut 0 Mehalla 0; Mansoura 1 Entag Harby 1.
Aug 24: Mokawloon 2 Zamalek 2; Petrojet 1 Ismaili 1.
Aug 25: ENPPI 2 Gouna 1.
Sep 10: Mehalla 1 Mansoura 0; Zamalek 1 Ittihad 0.
Sep 11: Jaish 2 Ahly 4; Ismaili 1 Mokawloon 0; Shorta 2 Assyut 1; Gouna 1 Petrojet 0.

EGYPT	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ahly	4	3	1	0	9	4	10
Shorta	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Zamalek	4	2	1	1	7	5	7
Petrojet	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
ENPPI	3	2	0	1	6	6	6
Entag Harby	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
Haras Hedood	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Ismaili	4	1	2	1	6	6	5
Gouna	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Jaish	4	1	1	2	8	9	4
Mehalla	4	1	1	2	1	5	4
Mansoura	4	0	3	1	4	5	3
Masry	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Mokawloon	4	0	3	1	4	5	3
Assyut	4	0	3	1	2	3	3
Ittihad	4	0	1	3	3	8	1

SOUTH AFRICA

Aug 18: SuperSport 1 Chiefs 0.
Aug 19: Arrows 2 Cosmos 0; Platinum Stars 0 AmaZulu 1; Santos 0 Celtic 1; Free State Stars 1 Ajax 1; Pirates 0 Sundowns 0; Aces 2 Swallows 1; Wits 1 Maritzburg 1.
Aug 26: Arrows 1 Platinum Stars 1; Cosmos 2 Aces 1; Swallows 0 Pirates 1; Sundowns 1 Free State Stars 1; Ajax 0 Santos 2; Celtic 1 SuperSport 1; Chiefs 0 Wits 1; Maritzburg 2 AmaZulu 0.
Aug 29: Aces 0 Arrows 0; SuperSport 0 Ajax 1; Platinum Stars 1 Maritzburg 0; Wits 1 Celtic 1; Pirates 4 Cosmos 0; Santos 1 Sundowns 0.
Aug 30: AmaZulu 2 Chiefs 3; Free State Stars 0 Swallows 1.
Sep 12: Chiefs 0 Maritzburg 1; Cosmos 0 Free State Stars 0; Arrows 0 Pirates 0; Aces 1 Platinum Stars 1; Sundowns 1 SuperSport 1.
Sep 13: Celtic 1 AmaZulu 1; Ajax 1 Wits 1; Swallows 1 Santos 0.

SOUTH AFRICA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pirates	5	3	2	0	6	0	11
Maritzburg	5	2	2	1	5	3	8
Arrows	5	1	4	0	3	1	7
Celtic	5	1	4	0	6	5	7
Wits	5	1	4	0	6	5	7
Santos	5	2	1	2	3	2	7
Swallows	5	2	1	2	3	3	7
Sundowns	5	1	3	1	4	3	6
SuperSport	5	1	3	1	4	4	6
Platinum Stars	5	1	3	1	3	3	6
AmaZulu	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Aces	5	1	2	2	4	6	5
Ajax	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
Cosmos	5	1	2	2	2	7	5
FS Stars	5	0	4	1	4	5	4
Chiefs	5	1	1	3	3	5	4

Celtic recruit...Ki

MALDIVES

VB win first title

Last season's Maldives Cup winners VB Sports Club claimed their first league crown with a 4-1 win over Victory SC.

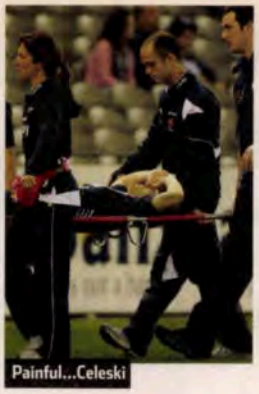
SOUTH KOREA

Steelers set record

Pohang Steelers recorded the biggest victory in the history of the K-League by beating Jeju United 8-1.

The win kept Pohang third, a point behind Jeonbuk Motors, who lost 2-1 at league leaders Seoul.

Seoul midfielder Ki Sung-yong will join Scottish club Celtic in January. The 20-year-old, who signed for a reported £2.1million, did not want to leave the club while they are still in the Asian Champions League.


Painful...Celeski

AUSTRALIA

Celeski loss for Victory

Melbourne Victory midfielder Billy Celeski will now miss the rest of the A-League season after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament against Newcastle Jets.

Celeski, who had recently made his international debut for the Socceroos, may also be out of Melbourne's Asian Champions League campaign.

TUNISIA

Aug 22: Hammam-Sousse 1 Etoile Sahel 5.
Sep 12: Esperance Tunis 4 Sfaxien 0.
Sep 13: Gafsa 2 Hammam-Sousse 0; Kairouanaise 0 Bizertin 3; Olympique 0 Club Africain 1; Esperance Zarzis 1 Stade Tunisien 2; Monastir 2 Kasserine 2.

TUNISIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bizertin	5	4	1	0	9	3	13
Esperance T	5	4	0	1	13	5	12
Etoile Sahel	4	3	1	0	11	2	10
Stade Tunisien	5	3	1	1	8	5	10
Club Africain	5	3	1	1	3	1	10
Sfaxien	5	2	1	2	8	6	7
Monastir	5	1	3	1	9	7	6
Gafsa	5	1	3	1	4	5	6
Kairouanaise	5	2	0	3	2	5	6
Esperance Z	5	1	1	3	5	7	4
Kasserine	5	1	1	3	5	14	4
Ham-Sousse	5	1	0	4	4	12	3
Olympique	5	0	2	3	0	5	2
Ham-Lif	4	0	1	3	3	7	1

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals draw
Bunyodkor (Uzb) v Pohang Steelers (SKo)
Kawasaki Frontale (Jap) v Nagoya Grampus (Jap)
Pakhtakor (Uzb) v Al Ittihad (Sau)
Umm Salal (Qat) v Seoul (SKo)
1st legs - Sep 23/24; 2nd legs - Sep 30

AFC CUP

Quarter-finals draw
Al Karama (Syr) v Al Arabi (Kuw)
Chonburi (Tha) v Binh Duong (Vie)
Kuwait SC (Kuw) v Arbil (Irq)
Neftchi (Uzb) v South China (HK)
1st legs - Sep 15; 2nd legs - Sep 30

AUSTRALIA

Regular season
Aug 21: Adelaide 0 Gold Coast 2.
Aug 22: Central Coast 0 Sydney 0; North Queensland 0 Melbourne 1.
Aug 23: Brisbane 1 Wellington 1; Perth 2 Newcastle 0.
Aug 28: Adelaide 3 North Queensland 3; Perth 2 Melbourne 1.
Aug 29: Brisbane 1 Central Coast 0.
Aug 30: Newcastle 1 Gold Coast 0; Sydney 2 Wellington 0.
Sep 3: Melbourne 1 Newcastle 1.
Sep 4: Wellington 1 Adelaide 1; Central Coast 2 Perth 1.
Sep 5: Gold Coast 2 Sydney 1; North Queensland 1 Brisbane 1.
Sep 11: Adelaide 1 Central Coast 0.
Sep 12: Newcastle 0 Brisbane 3; Sydney 0 North Queensland 1.
Sep 13: Melbourne 1 Wellington 1; Perth 2 Gold Coast 2.

AUSTRALIA – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gold Coast	6	4	1	1	14	5	13
Sydney	6	3	1	2	7	5	10
Brisbane	6	2	3	1	10	8	9
Central Coast	6	2	2	2	5	4	8
Adelaide	6	2	2	2	6	7	8
Newcastle	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
Perth	6	2	1	3	8	8	7
Melbourne	6	1	3	2	7	9	6
Wellington	6	1	3	2	7	9	6
N Queensland	6	1	2	3	7	13	5

CHINA

Aug 22: Shaanxi 1 Shenzhen 1; Qingdao 2 Changsha 1; Jiangsu 1 Beijing 0; Dalian 0 Guangzhou 0; Hangzhou 0 Henan 0; Chongqing 0 Tianjin 6; Chengdu 2 Changchun 1; Shandong 1 Shanghai 0.
Aug 26: Guangzhou 2 Hangzhou 0; Dalian 0 Shenzhen 0; Changchun 3 Shandong 2; Qingdao 0 Jiangsu 0; Tianjin 1 Changsha 1; Shanghai 0 Shaanxi 2; Beijing 2 Chengdu 2.
Aug 27: Henan 2 Chongqing 0.
Aug 30: Shaanxi 0 Changchun 1; Jiangsu 0 Tianjin 1; Shenzhen 1 Shanghai 2; Beijing 1 Shandong 1; Chengdu 0 Qingdao 0; Changsha 0 Henan 3; Chongqing 1 Guangzhou 0; Hangzhou 2 Dalian 1.
Sep 4: Beijing 1 Shaanxi 0.
Sep 5: Guangzhou 2 Changsha 1; Dalian 1 Chongqing 0; Hangzhou 1 Shenzhen 2; Tianjin 2 Chengdu 1; Henan 1 Jiangsu 1; Shanghai 0 Changchun 0.
Sep 6: Qingdao 3 Shandong 1.
Sep 12: Shaanxi 1 Qingdao 0; Chengdu 3 Henan 2; Jiangsu 3 Guangzhou 1; Shenzhen 4 Changchun 0; Shandong 4 Tianjin 0; Changsha 1 Dalian 1; Shanghai 1 Beijing 1.

CHINA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Beijing	22	9	9	4	35	21	36
Shandong	22	9	9	4	28	22	36
Henan	22	9	8	5	23	16	35
Tianjin	22	9	7	6	28	18	34
Guangzhou	22	9	6	7	32	26	33
Changchun	22	9	6	7	25	25	33
Jiangsu	22	8	8	6	23	17	32
Shanghai	22	8	7	7	26	21	31
Dalian	22	8	7	7	21	20	31
Qingdao	22	6	9	7	26	25	27
Hangzhou	21	7	5	9	22	25	26
Shaanxi	22	6	7	9	18	18	25
Chengdu	22	7	4	11	22	29	25
Changsha	22	5	10	7	17	24	25
Shenzhen*	22	6	6	10	22	35	21
Chongqing	21	3	6	12	13	39	15

**3pts deducted for kit rule violation*

IRAN

Aug 20: Pas 1 Persepolis 2; Esteghlal Ahvaz 1 Mes 0.
Aug 21: Zob-Ahan 3 Steel Azin 1; Moghavemat 3 Sepahan 1; Peykan 4 Malavan 0; Rah-Ahan 0 Saipa 1; Shahin 2 Teraktor Sazi 4; Esteghlal Tehran 1 Foolad 0; Saba 2 AbooMoslem 1.
Aug 27: Malavan 0 Esteghlal Tehran 0.
Aug 28: Persepolis 1 Saba 0; Foolad 1 Moghavemat 1; Mes 3 Pas 2; Steel Azin 2 Shahin 1; Teraktor 2 Rah-Ahan 1; AbooMoslem 1 Zob-Ahan 2; Saipa 0 Peykan 2; Sepahan 4 Esteghlal Ahvaz 1.
Sep 4: Shahin 1 AbooMoslem 1; Pas 2 Esteghlal Ahvaz 1.
Sep 7: Zob-Ahan 1 Persepolis 1; Peykan 1 Teraktor Sazi 0; Rah-Ahan 1 Steel Azin 1; Moghavemat 4 Malavan 0; Foolad 0 Sepahan 0; Saba 1 Mes 3; Esteghlal Tehran 2 Saipa 1.
Sep 13: Steel Azin 0 Peykan 1; Malavan 1 Foolad 0; Esteghlal Ahvaz 0 Saba 1; Saipa 1 Moghavemat 1; Mes 5 Zob-Ahan 2; AbooMoslem 1 Rah-Ahan 1; Sepahan 3 Pas 1; Teraktor Sazi 1 Esteghlal Tehran 1.
Sep 14: Persepolis 2 Shahin 2.

IRAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peykan	6	4	1	1	9	3	13
Moghavemat	6	3	3	0	11	3	12
Esteghlal T	6	3	3	0	5	2	12
Zob-Ahan	6	3	2	1	11	8	11
Sepahan	6	3	1	2	11	6	10
Mes	6	3	1	2	14	12	10
Persepolis	6	2	4	0	10	8	10
Steel Azin	6	3	1	2	10	9	10
Saba	6	3	0	3	9	10	9
Teraktor Sazi	6	2	2	2	8	7	8
Malavan	6	2	2	2	4	10	8
Saipa	6	2	1	3	4	8	7
Rah-Ahan	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Esteghlal A	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
AbooMoslem	6	0	4	2	5	7	4
Pas	6	1	1	4	6	11	4
Foolad	6	0	3	3	3	6	3
Shahin	6	0	3	3	7	11	3

JAPAN

Aug 19: Sanfrecce 1 Oita 0; Vissel 1 Kashima 0; Kyoto 0 Shimizu 1; Jubilo 2 Kawasaki 1; Albirex 1 Gamba 2; JEF 0 Nagoya 2; Montedio 1 Tokyo 0; Yokohama 1 Omiya 0; Urawa 1 Kashiwa 4.
Aug 22: Omiya 1 JEF 1; Sanfrecce 2 Urawa 1; Shimizu 5 Jubilo 1; Albirex 1 Kyoto 2; Kashiwa 1 Yokohama 1.
Aug 23: Gamba 2 Nagoya 3; Kashima 3 Tokyo 1; Kawasaki 2 Montedio 0.
Aug 24: Oita 0 Vissel 2.
Aug 29: Omiya 3 Kashima 1; Tokyo 2 Oita 0; Yokohama 1 JEF 1; Jubilo 1 Gamba 3; Nagoya 1 Albirex 0; Vissel 3 Urawa 2.
Aug 30: Montedio 1 Sanfrecce 2; Kashiwa 0 Kyoto 0; Kawasaki 1 Shimizu 1.
Sep 12: Shimizu 1 Omiya 0; Kyoto 2 Tokyo 1; JEF 0 Albirex 1; Sanfrecce 3 Yokohama 2; Nagoya 2 Kashiwa 3; Gamba 3 Vissel 2.
Sep 13: Urawa 4 Montedio 1; Oita 2 Jubilo 1.

JAPAN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kashima	24	15	5	4	35	19	50
Kawasaki	24	12	7	5	41	27	43
Sanfrecce	25	12	7	6	42	30	43
Shimizu	25	11	10	4	39	27	43
Gamba	25	13	3	9	45	34	42
Albirex	25	10	9	6	36	25	39
Urawa	25	11	4	10	32	33	37
Tokyo	25	11	3	11	33	31	36
Kyoto	25	10	5	10	28	29	35
Nagoya	25	10	5	10	32	34	35
Vissel	25	9	5	11	33	38	32
Jubilo	25	9	5	11	37	46	32
Yokohama	25	7	10	8	32	28	31
Omiya	25	7	9	9	29	34	30
Montedio	25	7	6	12	28	34	27
Kashiwa	25	5	10	10	30	45	25
JEF	25	4	10	11	23	37	22
Oita	25	4	1	20	17	41	13

SOUTH KOREA

Aug 22: Ulsan 1 Jeju 2; Daegu 0 Seoul 3; Chonbuk 1 Pohang 3; Gwangju 1 Chunnam 2; Gyeongnam 3 Busan 1.
Aug 23: Songnam 1 Daejeon 2; Suwon 1 Incheon 2.
Aug 29: Daegu 1 Busan 1; Chunnam 2 Suwon 0; Incheon 1 Gyeongnam 2.
Aug 30: Jeju 1 Songnam 2; Gangwon 2 Gwangju 2; Daejeon 0 Chonbuk 2; Seoul 0 Ulsan 2.
Sep 6: Daegu 0 Incheon 0; Chonbuk 4 Jeju 2; Songnam 1 Seoul 0; Gyeongnam 4 Chunnam 1; Pohang 2 Daejeon 2; Ulsan 3 Busan 1; Suwon 3 Gangwon 3.
Sep 12: Chunnam 0 Daegu 1; Gangwon 0 Gyeongnam 4; Incheon 0 Ulsan 0; Busan 1 Songnam 2; Seoul 2 Chonbuk 1.
Sep 13: Gwangju 0 Suwon 3; Jeju 1 Pohang 8.

SOUTH KOREA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Seoul	22	13	3	6	36	21	42
Chonbuk	21	11	5	5	43	28	38
Pohang	21	9	10	2	43	25	37
Songnam	21	9	5	7	26	23	32
Incheon	21	8	8	5	23	23	32
Gwangju	21	9	3	9	27	24	30
Chunnam	21	8	6	7	34	35	30
Gyeongnam	22	6	10	6	25	23	28
Jeju	22	7	6	9	22	35	27
Ulsan	22	6	8	8	26	25	26
Suwon	22	6	7	9	22	25	25
Gangwon	21	6	7	8	37	44	25
Daejeon	21	5	9	7	21	27	24
Busan	22	5	7	10	27	33	22
Daegu	22	2	8	12	16	37	14

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

World Cup...Hungary (red) v Portugal

October 2
African Champions League semi-finals 1st leg
October 10/11
World Cup qualifiers
October 13/14
World Cup qualifiers
October 16
Under-20 World Cup Final; African Champions League semi-finals 2nd leg
October 21
Asian Champions League semi-finals 1st leg
October 24
Under-17 World Cup starts
October 28
Asian Champions League semi-finals 2ns leg
October 30
African Champions League Final 1st leg

Famous Last Words

Who said what and why

"Every time I had the ball, there were monkey noises. This can't go unpunished"

Panathinaikos' new French recruit Djibril Cisse reacts with justified anger to racist attacks from the fans of Volos during a friendly

"Pressure on us is logical. We're Brazilian and we would be real contenders if we scooped up 11 kids off the street and put them in *Selecao* kit"

Brazil boss Dunga on his team's status as 2010 World Cup favourites

"My dream is to one day be a government minister"

Two months after being forced to quit the game because of heart trouble, former France striker Steve Savidan sets his sights on scoring in political circles

"It bothers me more than anything. He was fouled and didn't fall"

Volker Finke, the German coach of Urawa Red Diamonds, does not appreciate the non-simulation of his midfielder Sergio Escudero

"Mourinho should speak less"

Italian muslim leader Mohamed Nour Dachan responds to the claim of Internazionale's coach that midfielder Sulley Muntari was suffering due to Ramadan fasting

Outraged...Dachan

"He doesn't have to prove his worth with every touch"

Real Madrid director Jorge Valdano tells Cristiano Ronaldo not to be obsessed with show-stopping moments

"They wanted to sell us cotton for the price of silk"

Fiorentina technical director Pantaleo Corvino explains why he was unable to bring in transfer targets such as Emmanuel Eboue (Arsenal), Bruno Alves (Porto) and Luisao (Benfica)

"I'm just not a bluffer"

France boss Raymond Domenech on being knocked out early of a poker tournament in Las Vegas. Fans in his homeland may disagree

"The players will have one day with their family, with the girls and friends. It will be one day a week, after each game and that is enough. We are going there to play, not for a holiday"

England coach Fabio Capello lays down the law to the players' wives and girlfriends over next summer's World Cup

"We will be German champions, though I'm not sure of the year"

Schalke coach Felix Magath tries flexible confidence

"President, buy someone"

A fan gives under-fire Milan owner Silvio Berlusconi some pertinent advice in the wake of the 4-0 derby day humiliation at the hands of Inter

Cut the showboating...Ronaldo

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